PAINTING RUINS: GRAFFITI AND STREET ART IN POST-EARTHQUAKE CHRISTCHURCH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

by Reuben Woods

University of Canterbury

2016

Contents

Figure Index:

All images by the author, unless otherwise specified.

Acknowledgements:

There are numerous people who have contributed to this work, including some who may not have been aware of their influence, the following is a thank you to all those I have encountered over the last four years:

To my supervising team, beginning with Emilie Sitzia, for her initial support and encouragement. Ian Lochhead and Richard Bullen, for their assistance. Finally, to Barbara Garrie and Rosie Ibbotson, who both proved wonderfully supportive and understanding, consistently keeping my spirits up and providing me with a sense of self-belief when my confidence has, at times, waned.

The following people have all contributed selflessly to this work, and I hope my sincere gratitude is recognised and that in many cases, I can now consider many of these people friends: Porta, Dr Suits (Nathan Ingram), Jenna Lynn Brown, Wongi Wilson, Emma Wilson, Ikarus, George Shaw, Shannon Webster, Cinzah Seekayem, Karl Sheridan, Mike Hewson, Trent Hiles, Jacob Yikes, Tess Sheerin, Eno, Xpres One, Dcypher, Eddie Zammit, Vans the Omega, Drypnz, Karl Sheridan, Power, Teeth, Koti Puru, Richard “Popx” Baker, Brians, Apek, Devos One, Kieos, Beksi, Marc Catley, Joel Hart, Hitnes, Aleix Gordo Hostau, Fluro, Sofles, Selina Miles, Askew One, Deus, Gary Silipa, Jack McCain, Gaby Montejo, Jeremy Sauzier, Daken, Rakue, Sean Duffell, Ryan Reynolds, Coralie Winn, Deborah McCormick, Jo Mair, Josie Whelan, Barnaby Bennett, Steph Walker, Douglas Horrell, Anthony Wright, Chris O’Rourke, Sarah Murray, Josh O’Rourke, Sue Davison, Paul Zaanen, Bec May, Andrew Just, Kerry Ann Lee, Tjalling de Vries, Charles Poynton, Tony Cribb and Jason Kelly. Thank you also to Caleb McNabb, Ben Leith and Nat Gun for the technical assistance. There are undoubtedly more people who I know should be mentioned, and I here extend apologies and gratitude. Furthermore, there are countless anonymous artists and interventionists who I have never met but whose work has provided more influence than they will ever realise.

To my friends and family who put up with a fixation that has at times seemed absurd. To my parents, Tony and Sally, for always being proud. Finally, to Gunnie and Lulu, thank you for giving me smiles and cuddles, sacrifice, support and patience.

Abstract:

This thesis considers the presence and potential readings of graffiti and street art as part of the wider creative public landscape of Christchurch in the wake of the series of earthquakes that significantly disrupted the city physically and socially. While documenting a specific and unprecedented period of time in the city's history, the prominence of graffiti and street art throughout the constantly changing landscape has also highlighted their popularity as increasingly entrenched additions to urban and suburban settings across the globe. In post-quake Christchurch, graffiti and street art have often displayed established tactics, techniques and styles while exploring and exposing the unique issues confronting this disrupted environment, illustrating both a transposable nature and the entwined relationship with the surrounding landscape evident in the conception of these art forms. The post-quake city has afforded graffiti and street art the opportunity to engage with a range of concepts: from the re-activation and re-population of the empty and abandoned spaces of the city, to commentaries on specific social and political issues, both angry and humorous, and notably the reconsideration of entrenched and evolving traditions, including the distinction between guerrilla and sanctioned work. The examples of graffiti and street art within this work range from the more immediate post-quake appearance of art in a group of affected suburbs, including the increasingly empty residential red-zone, to the use of the undefined spaces sweeping the central city, and even inside the Canterbury Museum, which housed the significant street art exhibition *Rise* in 2013-2014. These settings expose a number of themes, both distinctive and shared, that relate to both the post-disaster landscape and the concerns of graffiti and street art as art movements unavoidably entangled with public space.

Keywords: art, graffiti, street art, mural, Christchurch, earthquakes, post-disaster landscape

Foreword:

I still remember the shaking of the earthquake that struck the morning of September 4th, 2010. Even in the darkness of the early morning it was clear how violently the room was moving. As light dawned following a few hours of intermittent sleep between aftershocks, it became clear that the impact across various parts of the city was much worse than the clutter of books on my bedroom floor. That day a visit to a local corner shop, with most of its stock on the floor, provided some supplies (perhaps the selection of soft drink, potato chips and chocolate biscuits we gathered was indicative of both a lack of preparedness for such an event and a lack of insight into the severity of the situation), but also the more immediate experience of the visible damage to streets, homes and buildings we passed on our short journey. In the days that followed, the physical damage across the city was revealed as routine returned. Flooded streets in Bexley, broken brick churches across the city, and fallen chimneys that had been reassembled on front lawns, reminiscent of Carl André sculptures, all became common sights. Yet although there were newly erected hurricane fences surrounding damaged and braced buildings, within weeks I was visiting inner city cafés, browsing my favourite record stores, and even purchasing a ticket to a concert in March 2011. That ticket stayed in my wallet for almost three years.

When the February 22nd, 2011 earthquake hit several months later, there was a sense of unwelcome familiarity. But there was also an inescapable feeling that this time was worse. As I congregated with a mass of people in a suburban carpark, murmured stories of the events in the central city drifted through the unsettled crowds. The wide-reaching impact was almost immediately apparent. It took hours to get home. Streets were flooded with water from burst underground pipes, and traffic was inching out of the city. At home, a firewall had collapsed, covering the living room in plaster and brick. In hindsight, it was less than many others suffered. A drizzling grey mist had settled over the city, a seemingly fitting atmosphere. We left Christchurch that day, for rural respite with family. The cars in sink holes and warped concrete we passed were surreal, like something from a post-apocalyptic film. In the following days and weeks, we slowly reintroduced ourselves to our broken home, and started to form an understanding of the way life would be for the immediate future in post-quake Christchurch. As weeks passed, a sense of a “new normal” was established. The visible impact of the quakes lingered, from damaged or completely disappeared buildings, to the orange road cones and hurricane fencing that dotted and framed so much of the city’s shattered surroundings. It seemed the physical environment was a manifestation of the city’s emotional state, and engaging with the post-quake landscape would be an important aspect of the following years of recovery.

Introduction:

Painting Ruins: Graffiti and street art in post-earthquake Christchurch

"I'll be nice to CHCH when CHCH is nice to me"

- **Anonymous stencil, Peterborough Street (Fig. 1.1)**

This thesis presents both documentation and analysis of the graffiti and street art practices that have emerged as part of the wider creative landscape of post-earthquake Christchurch. The cluster of earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 significantly affected the city, not only physically but also socially and politically.[1] Within this constantly changing environment, graffiti and street art have played a significant role in reflecting many of the issues that have surrounded the recovery effort and the process of reconstruction. These artistic interventions have been varied, from urban activation organisation Gap Filler's participatory projects[2], to the public presence of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, and an array of independent productions. By the time I began this project, around the first anniversary of the February 2011 quake, it was already clear that the city's broken buildings, vacant lots and exposed walls had become important sites of potential activation and commentary through art, from transformative murals that served to signify the recovery's progress (or lack thereof), to small acts of resistance that challenged the "official" authority of the rebuild, or even playful gestures that created unexpected moments of reflection. As I explored the city, the

[1] While the major quakes of September 2010 and February 2011 have been the focus of much coverage, thousands of aftershocks and smaller quakes have rattled the landscape. As such, the effect of the earthquakes on the city's physical state was not a case of "one and done", but drawn out over a lengthy period of time. The deconstruction of the city is also a result of the political decision making process, which in itself has been a contested and fiery issue.

[2] Gap Filler was started in response to the earthquakes as an attempt to reactivate vacant spaces around the city. Projects ranging from a cycle-powered cinema to a mini golf course around the city, have gained the organisation a significant profile as a leading contributor to the city's renewal.

breadth and diversity of these constantly renewing interventions and transformations was revealed, signalling the richness of this field of research.

While this dissertation is specifically invested in the local post-disaster setting, graffiti and street art are also truly international in scope. In exploring the local post-earthquake landscape, it is possible to problematize and interrogate existing ideas about graffiti and street art formulated through their wider global tropes. I departed Christchurch for Europe and the United States several months after the February earthquake, spending several months travelling. The busy cities I visited contrasted with Christchurch's broken streets and cordoned inner city, but comparison was inevitable as I thought of home. In New York, London, Berlin, San Francisco, Barcelona and Paris, I hunted out the graffiti and street art that suggested the energies and contradictions of these spaces. As I explored these cities, I was led in various directions, down alleyways and into various enclaves and neighbourhoods, graffiti and street art serving as alternative tour guides from more traditional tourist sites and landmarks **(Figs. 1.2-1.6)**. Largely unmediated by institutions, the murals, stencils, graffiti, stickers, posters and paintings were often reflections of the surrounding environments and numerous communities, but also the wide-reaching popularity of graffiti and street art as forms of public art.

Art historian and curator Rafael Schacter has asserted that graffiti and street art present considerable scope "both in terms of space, through its all-pervasive global reach, as well as time, through its status as a practice that is as old as human culture itself."[3] Both celebrated and reviled, they serve as constantly evolving creative reflections of the physical and social environments they inhabit with us. Art historian Anna Waclawek has explained that as a "visual tradition that has subsisted for over forty years and continues to evolve worldwide is unsurprisingly ripe with discourse… People want to talk about graffiti and street art because these art forms, which exist in the city, are accessible to everyone and are simultaneously mysterious and controversial."[4] By the first decade of the new Millennium, graffiti and street art were already well-entrenched features of Christchurch's pre-quake urban and suburban settings, but the earthquakes, and the broken and complicated landscape that emerged, can be considered as providing almost constant opportunities for artists (both those seeking permission and those unconcerned with such consent), and as an antagonist for the increased popular visibility and recognition of these art forms within the city's public and cultural identity. Twenty years ago, graffiti and street art may not have been considered as a meaningful part of a post-disaster discourse. Indeed, my investigation of other notable local and international sites of significant disasters, such as the Napier earthquake of 1931, revealed relatively little research and

[3] Rafael Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, Sydney, NewSouth, 2013, p. 9
[4] Anna Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2011, p. 7

documentation of such additions, perhaps a reflection of both the specific physical impact of each event and the period of history in which they occurred (although the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and the Haitian earthquake of 2010 did provide some useful, if inconsistent insight, while also highlighting the rise of graffiti and street art in the second half of the twentieth century).[5] However, by the second decade of the twenty-first century, the ubiquity of graffiti and street art within our physical environments, and their engagements with these spaces, has ensured that they are an entirely fitting subject to investigate in this context, providing both social and artistic lenses. Even if post-quake Christchurch has not cultivated a uniquely local visual style, the specific relationship between the surrounding environment and the city's graffiti and street art is almost constantly evident, if not in outward appearance, then in the surrounding context and spaces of reception.

This thesis seeks to respond to both a unique event in Christchurch's history, and the continued global prominence of graffiti and street art. However, the contemporaneous nature of the topic renders it a difficult proposition, as both the city and the artistic interventions inscribed within it continue to change. As such, it has been necessary to restrict this work to a defined period of time, specifically between the February earthquake in 2011 and late 2014.[6] Within the constraints of this timeframe, this dissertation seeks to investigate a range of concerns, rather than develop a strictly linear chronological narrative. In many ways, this ongoing and evolving nature of the topic ensures many questions remain difficult to resolve with certainty, providing ample opportunity for further research. This thesis thus operates as a snapshot of graffiti and street art practices within the evolving city.

This work is not intended as a history of Christchurch graffiti and street art, nor a qualitative or quantitative comparison of graffiti and street art in pre- and post-quake Christchurch. Despite the higher profile of graffiti and street art in the post-quake city, outside of the informal knowledge of those within the graffiti and street art cultures there is a distinct lack of thorough documentation recording the city's pre-quake scenes.[7] Indeed, constructing definitive histories of such informal and underground subjects is essentially impossible. Roger Gastman and Caleb Neelon, in compiling *The History of American Graffiti* (2011), recall how one graffiti writer they interviewed declared: "Anyone who tries to tell you the history of graffiti is either a liar or a fool…".[8] Graffiti in particular is a

[5] The relationship between graffiti and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco was not immediately apparent, becoming more recognised as the city has become more famous for the unique graffiti and street art cultures that developed in the Bay City, giving rise to the likes of Barry McGee (Twist).

[6] It should be noted that there is a flexibility to this timeframe, with certain examples and events providing relevant insights within these discussions.

[7] A veteran graffiti artist explained to me his preference for the city's pre-quake graffiti scene's characters and styles, despite the increased exposure and opportunities of the post-quake period.

[8] Roger Gastman and Caleb Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, New York, Harper Design, 2011, p. 15

competitive culture, where participants will make their own histories and lay claim to innovation. In the wake of the earthquakes and the rising popularity and profile of graffiti and street art, both in public perception and with a new wave of artists, I hope artists present their stories of Christchurch's graffiti and street art cultures, offering unique insights and spanning wider timeframes than I do here.

The main body of this thesis is divided into five chapters, three of which relate to distinct geographical (from the suburban red zone to the urban inner city and even inside the Canterbury Museum) and conceptual ideas (from supportive community gestures to transgressive interventions poking fun at local political figures), but with recurring concepts emerging throughout. Despite the inevitable overlap, these chapters follow a subtle, somewhat flexible progression that relates to the various stages of the earthquake experience, from the relatively immediate post-quake period to the more recent stages of the city's recovery, represented by the staging of *Rise*, which extended into 2014. The examples on which I focus are varied and characteristically difficult to define and categorise concisely. This difficulty is indicative of the disparate range of contributors to the post-quake landscape, as well as the expanding diversity of graffiti and street art, including their relationship with public art practices. As a result, this work highlights the specifics of the local setting as a site for art, but also offers a broader reading of the fields of graffiti and street art as complex examples of art in our public spaces, despite acknowledging and affirming their self-defined histories and intentions.

Chapter One serves as both a review of literature and an explanation of the methods of research. Within these frameworks, this discussion investigates the definition of the terms graffiti and street art (as well as some additional related terminology) and the difficulties in their application to an ever-increasing range of art. Graffiti and street art are expanding and increasingly challenging to define, but retain a unique frame of reference as distinct from other forms of public art. While they speak distinct languages, they often occupy similar spaces and share public perceptions and broadly constructed histories. Perhaps immediately associated with independent and resistant voices in public space, they are also inherently different from perceptions of large-scale municipal public art, or even increasingly performance-based contemporary public practices, although there is a growing level of overlap.[9] This chapter also attempts to situate this work within broader considerations of graffiti and street art. The scholarly and popular discussions of these fields provide a number of relevant approaches and concerns, from the relationship to art historical discourses, to the important connection to place evident in these forms of art. Local writing about the earthquake experience and

[9] While much graffiti and street art is resistant due to its unauthorized presence, it must also be remembered that it is often playful as well – an important consideration when one notes that the term resistant often incites associations with incendiary or anarchic messages and images. In fact, the range of what is considered street art and graffiti is expanding as more and more legal productions are produced.

recovery is also vital to building a foundation from which the specific interest in graffiti and street art can be built. Finally, this chapter provides a relatively brief summation of the challenges and necessary decisions made in the research of this work, specifically the interviews with artists and various figures, and the collection of photographic images which have served as the primary data and have represented my immersion within the post-quake landscape.

Chapter Two provides some important local context, including Christchurch's relationship with art in its public spaces, and notably the emergence of graffiti and street art. This chapter considers aspects of Christchurch's physical and social landscapes, as both a post-disaster setting, but also as a city with layered pre-existing cultural identities and narratives. This context provides the grounding for the various overarching concerns of this dissertation, beginning with an overview of the earthquake experience and the impact upon the city, from the disasters themselves to social responses to them. This discussion considers how the city was developed, in part, as an English transplant (which has often overshadowed the pre-existing indigenous histories and evolving demographics), and the presence and role of art in public spaces through its history, from the statues of founding figures to the arrival of graffiti and street art in the late twentieth century, highlighting the various reinforcements of and challenges to this identity. Importantly, the arrival of graffiti and street art both nationally and locally, and the place occupied by these cultures by the time the earthquakes irrevocably altered Christchurch's landscape is also explored. The post-quake "art-world" responses are considered as a way of suggesting the presence of graffiti and street art, and their public nature, as a more visible part of the city's visual and cultural identity based on an apparent lack of public space cultures that might have been drawn on in the city's altered setting.

In Chapter Three I investigate Christchurch's post-quake suburbs, where artistic responses often engaged directly with the specific impact of the quakes upon individuals and suburban communities, providing gestures of support and expressions of frustration. As a suburban city, where most citizens reside outside the city centre, Christchurch's neighbourhoods provided an important setting for the immediate impact of the quakes on daily existence within familiar sites of experience, from the privacy of home to more communal spaces. The suburbs therefore also prove interesting for the investigation of both the changing nature of the most affected communities, but also the way people responded to the earthquake experience by utilising public space in creative ways. This chapter considers the range of art found throughout a number of the city's most significantly affected suburbs, often manifestations of the specific experiences of communities, but also often displaying the influence of graffiti and street art, conceptually and materially. The suburbs were the site of the work most tenuously connected to the widely accepted notions of graffiti and street art. This was to some degree

on account of the community-focussed interventions that draw on an array of influences from folk art to urban art tactics. This scope affords a consideration of the evolving nature of art in the streets, spanning not only graffiti and street art as rebellious urban youth cultures driven by the influence of popular culture, but also the expanding material and stylistic approaches that might more specifically be positioned as forms of "independent public art", a term I adopt from Schacter, who in turn credits cultural theorist Javier Abarca with its development.[10]

Christchurch's central city is the focus of Chapter Four, a site of significant damage following both the September and February quakes. This chapter considers the experience of the inner city as a setting that affords almost limitless opportunities to artists willing to intervene, and perhaps displays a more traditional approach to the manifestations of graffiti and street art. While it may not have had the residential profile or immediate lived experience of the suburbs, Christchurch's central city has undeniably been a vital location in the city's history and identity, both pre- and post-quake. The central city has provided an inviting and fitting landscape for graffiti and street art to engage with elements of a concurrently urban (albeit one unique from established expectations of such space) and post-disaster setting. While the suburbs hosted post-quake day-to-day life, in the wake of the February quake, the central city was held captive behind a cordon. Within the cordon, the city's urban "heart" was significantly damaged, facing a drawn out process of renewal that would constantly present the juxtaposition of old and new, destruction and reconstruction, of the reconciliation of memory and the opportunity for change through intervention. This setting provided a unique landscape of damage and emptiness that was re-populated by graffiti and street artists. The work of these artists allows the consideration of the inner city itself as a victim of the quakes, the acts of memorialisation and reflection, the re-population of this once busy setting, and the exploration of and attempts to conquer newly unfamiliar and constantly shifting spaces.

The final chapter considers the relationship between sanctioned and unsanctioned work within the city's recovery, and the emergence of graffiti and street art as "official" symbols of rejuvenation. These sanctioned examples are placed in contrast to the unsanctioned, guerrilla interventions that have been important contributions to the discourses of the post-quake city as a contested and politicised setting. This chapter is less specific geographically, drawing instead upon the more broadly evident evolution of sanctioned and unsanctioned graffiti and street art, utilising the wider post-quake landscape to illuminate aspects of this discourse. The broad discussions at the core of this chapter are recurring issues in the field of contemporary graffiti and street art. Around the world these art forms continue to evolve in their relationship to public space and with authority. Graffiti and street art have

[10] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 9

often been defined by illegality as an intrinsic part of their distinction from institutional art, this sense of rebelliousness is an important element of their conception and reception, as highlighted in the following chapter's review of the literature surrounding these forms of art. As forms of public expression that have been both chastised and celebrated, the increasing sanctioned presence of work by graffiti and street artists has been much discussed by scholars and commentators. The immediate post-quake landscape afforded the presence of unsanctioned expressions to be less intrusive and in some cases more urgent, but over time, to also form a discourse around the access to public space and the critique of the recovery and those in charge. But the emergence of sanctioned forms of public art, and specifically graffiti and street art, presents an interesting dichotomy to be explored. The rising mural movement and popularity of graffiti and street art festivals across the globe provides a framework within which to consider the local presence of events such as *Rise* and *From the Ground Up*, projects that exposed these art forms on levels previously unseen in Christchurch, and the relationship between these additions and the rebellious roots of these art forms.

Each of these discussions (also supported and further contextualised by three appendices, including additional images, a timeline of relevant events and a glossary of graffiti, street art and earthquake terminology) contributes to a wider coverage of post-quake Christchurch as a setting for the varied performances of graffiti and street art. This spans responses to the earthquakes and the use of public space to express loss, offer support and the need to transform, while also considering the sizeable, complicated and ongoing recovery and rebuild, and the various artistic interventions and additions that have illuminated and contested this process, from the official to the subversive. The post-quake landscape has afforded graffiti and street art a stage in which both established and evolving tropes and performances have been evident, adding a new layer to the interpretation of these forms within a specific environment. The presence of graffiti and street art in Christchurch remains complicated, its multifaceted nature and manifestations continue to anger and amaze in equal parts, suggesting that while the post-quake city has afforded new levels of prominence and visibility to these art forms, they remain contentious and will continue to develop around an increasing number of discourses, much like they have across the world and throughout their now inter-generational histories.

Figures:

Figure 1.1: Unidentified artist, "I'll be nice to CHCH when CHCH is nice to me", Peterborough Street, central city (photo 19 May 2012)

Figure 1.2: Alice, Amsterdam (photo November 2011)

Figure 1.3: Invader, Paris (photo November 2011)

Figure 1.4: C215, Rome (photo November 2011)

Figure 1.5: ROA, Brussels (photo November 2011)

Figure 1.6: Eine, *SCARY*, London (photo November 2011)

1: Writing books about writing on walls: Defining terms, reviewing literature and explaining methodology

> "Graffiti writers are the most influential artists of their time, in terms of the number of people they reach, and the number of people making work influenced by them."[1]
>
> - **Jeffrey Deitch, curator**

> "Street art is the quintessential art movement of the twenty-first century."[2]
>
> - **Anna Waclawek, art historian**

Introduction

Graffiti and street art are arguably the most broadly conceived, widely practiced, and popularly appropriated art movements of contemporary culture. Waclawek has asserted that the "overwhelming pervasiveness of this art genre worldwide proves that urban painting is a defining art movement of the twenty-first century. Not limited by style, content, context, message or media, it is truly international."[3] While this thesis is grounded in the specific setting of post-quake Christchurch, the focus upon graffiti and street art inevitably ensures it is also entangled with the wide-reaching and diverse discourses surrounding these art forms. This chapter initially considers a number of issues that emerge in wider writing about graffiti and street art in an attempt to illustrate the framework in which

[1] Cedar Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, London, Tate, 2008, p. 30
[2] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 8
[3] Ibid., p. 190

this work primarily operates. The literature that has documented and discussed these ever-evolving and expanding forms exposes a range of concerns that are relevant both in Christchurch and around the world, from their difficult definition to their connection to public space. The combination of the local post-disaster setting and the nature of graffiti and street art as the subject matter for this work have also provided a number of specific challenges in the research process and methods employed. The second part of this chapter acknowledges a range of these issues, and explains the necessary decisions made as a result. These considerations include the experience of photographing the highly ephemeral graffiti and street art across the city over a drawn out period of time, and the interviews conducted with an array of subjects.

Graffiti and street art today represent significantly broader concepts than they did twenty, thirty or forty years ago. "Graffiti" and "street art" now commonly signify an almost unlimited range of projects, interventions and productions. Indeed, as anthropologist and curator Rafael Schacter noted in his 2013 book *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, this variety complicates their concise definition:

> As quite possibly the most common popular art form in existence today, this contemporary aesthetic practice has taken numerous different physical forms… absorbed variant local influences… occurred in multifarious environments… and been produced by disparate individuals… Indeed, there are as many different motivations, styles and approaches within this arena as there are practitioners themselves – a "street art" for every street artist, a "graffiti" for every graffiti writer.[4]

Schacter exemplifies this diversity by employing categories ranging from "symbolic figurative graffiti" to "conceptual vandalism", "culture jamming" to "absurdist urban interventions", "bibliographic bombing" to "contemporary muralism" to describe the varied styles of profiled artists.[5] As artistic and social practices, this stylistic variety is matched by graffiti and street art's ability to engage with issues across numerous scholarly disciplines and popular discussions. Indeed, scholarship around graffiti and street art has been diverse, with these practices providing ripe fields of analysis for a wide range of commentators. This diversity has ensured graffiti and street art are interesting participants in Christchurch's post-quake landscape.

Graffiti and street art are both notoriously insular and inevitably popular topics of discussion. While they are perhaps best, and most intimately, understood through the initiation of climbing fences, evading detection, and leaving a mark on a surface that will either surprise, enlighten or agitate an audience, a range of writing has attempted to explain their attraction, meaning and evolution. The

[4] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 9
[5] Ibid., various pages

importance of this first-hand knowledge, and the popular accessibility inherent in making art in the streets, often means artists view outsider and academic approaches to graffiti and street art as misdirected, too quick to align or draw comparison with established academic or art world preferences, rather than the specific histories and concerns of these art movements. As a result, in the wake of initial academic interest, much ensuing documentation and discussion of these cultures has often been penned by artists or insiders (Powers, 1999; O'Donnell, 2007; Gastman and Neelon, 2011). However, despite this skepticism, graffiti and street art's physical and cultural ubiquity and the varied responses they engender, have ensured a wider interest from scholars and commentators. Despite sociologist Nancy Macdonald's suggestion in her 2001 book *The Graffiti Subculture* (by which time graffiti writing culture was over thirty years old) that "our understanding [of graffiti writing] is basic, research has been thin", since the late 1970s, and with an increasing frequency since the turn of the millennium, a range of writers have utilised graffiti and street art to discuss diverse issues, investigating, documenting and defining the specific intricacies of these artistic movements as well as positioning them within broader social concerns.[6] Scholars from fields including sociology, anthropology, ethnography, urban geography, cultural studies and criminology, as well as art history, have constructed varied discourses that illustrate graffiti and street art's wide-reaching cultural relevancy and conceptual flexibility.[7] Authors have adopted a number of critical methodologies, from art historical approaches that profile artists in both monographs and surveys (Mathieson and Tàpies, 2009), investigations of specific locations (Manco, Lost Art and Neelon, 2005; Smallman and Nyman, 2011; Munro, 2012), time periods (Stewart, 2009; Chalfant and Jenkins, 2014) and material approaches (Chalfant and Prigoff, 1987; Manco, 2002; Walde, 2007; Kuittinen, 2015), to sociological and anthropological frameworks which locate graffiti and street art within concepts such as urban navigation (Dickens, 2008), transgressive behaviour and legality (Halsey and Young, 2006; Young, 2010; Young 2014) or even gender identity (Macdonald, 2001).[8]

Amongst an emerging body of critical research, graffiti and street art's popular profile has continued to grow; glossy new books are published regularly, and an exhibition by secretive British artist Banksy

[6] Nancy Macdonald, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York*, Hampshire/New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2001, p. 2

[7] In the University of Canterbury library, publications about graffiti and street art are included in sociological and geographical collections rather than art historical collections, a legacy of graffiti's initial sociological consideration, but also illustrative of the continually problematic place of these forms within "art world" narratives.

[8] The biographical approach is still problematic, with many artists attempting to retain some level of anonymity, revealing little about their real identities. The ongoing mystery surrounding Banksy's true identity has proven of interest to media and authors, resulting in an "unofficial" biography (Will Ellsworth-Jones, *Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall*, London, Aurum, 2012). Alternatively, a number of artists have produced books that collate their work and trace their progression, providing insight into their influences and concerns.

now elicits international mainstream media coverage.[9] Once largely anonymous and marginalised artists who made their name working in the streets are now culturally ubiquitous; from street to studio, Instagram to institutions, guerrilla interventions to large scale public art, cinema to *The Simpsons*. The subjects of street art's original critiques were now being embraced. While peers remain key judges of an artist's standing, graffiti and street artists' reputations are also established and championed by authors, academics, bloggers, websites, magazines, festival organisers, gallerists and dealers, and even companies such as aerosol paint manufacturers Ironlak, Montana, and Belton, who support rosters of artists and sponsor events and projects.[10] As well as academic analysis, popular publications (including a growing film and video profile), mainstream and niche media coverage and the internal dialogues of graffiti and street art communities, especially prevalent in online forums, such as websites, blogs and social media, are all contributors to these expansive discourses.[11] Australian art writer Din Heagney in the catalogue accompanying the 2010 exhibition *Space Invaders*, a survey of Australian street art held at Canberra's National Gallery, noted how street art publications "exploded in popularity in the mid-2000s, with everything from the glossy hardbacks to photocopied zines spreading the work of street artists around the world. The range of quality, despite the lack of critique, in many of these publications demonstrates the democratic notions around the immediacy of street art..."[12] While these various channels overlap in their subject, they often highlight specific interests and engage distinct audiences, illustrating the diverse coverage of graffiti and street art.

This work declares its focus upon graffiti and street art, however it recognises the problems in the employment of these terms within the broad spectrum of art across post-earthquake Christchurch. Despite (and perhaps due to) the growing prominence of graffiti and street art, these terms are often accepted without enquiry as to what they specifically represent and signify. While the difficult task of

---

[9] Uncredited, "Banksy's taking the Mickey at Dismaland", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 22, 2015, p. B2

[10] Indeed, artists with backgrounds working in the streets are increasingly celebrated by the art world, both Swoon and Kaws were nominated for the James Dicke Contemporary Art Prize in 2014. (Dan Duray, "Smithsonian Announces James Dicke Contemporary Art Prize Nominees", August 15, 2014, http://www.artnews.com/2014/08/15/smithsonian-announces-james-dicke-contemporary-art-prize-nominees/, accessed August 20, 2014)

[11] The construction of any history is rife with difficulty, and in the case of graffiti and street art, the anonymity, illegality and widespread participation make it an even more contentious process. Indeed, it is perhaps online, in social media and specialist forums that the most authentic and specific discussions of graffiti's histories and developments occur. This film presence ranges from full-length documentaries, such as the seminal *Style Wars* (1983), or Banksy's Oscar nominated *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010), to lower profile works such as *Vigilante, Vigilante* (2012), which focused on guerrilla anti-graffiti crusaders, and a proliferation of shorter videos that document the process of creating work, from covert interventions to large scale sanctioned works, such as *Limitless*, Selina Miles' collaboration with Australian artist Sofles, which as of 2015 had been viewed in excess of ten million times on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv-Do30-P8A, accessed March 10, 2016).

[12] Din Heagney, "The rise (and fall) of street stencils", in Jacklyn Babington, *Space Invaders– Australian Street/Stencils/Posters/Paste-Ups/Zines/Stickers*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 2010, p. 83

definition is not a primary concern of this thesis, some insight into the terms favoured here is helpful in constructing the framework within which they should be understood, even though precise description is challenged by various examples considered throughout. The definition of these terms, and the approaches to art-making they represent, has been a recurring interest to authors, especially as graffiti, street art and public art evolve and overlap. Such definition extends beyond formal analysis, including subcultural and thematic concerns. Despite their often erroneous or interchangeable use, graffiti and street art do represent distinct approaches, histories and concerns and a number of writers have specifically delineated between the two (Manco, 2004; Lewisohn, 2008; Waclawek, 2011). Tristan Manco has noted that the willingness of artists to experiment with style problematizes concise distinction, suggesting in his 2004 book *Street Logos*: "As former 'traditional' graffiti artists begin to use new techniques and paint in new ways it becomes more difficult to distinguish between 'street art' and 'graffiti'."[13] This fluidity renders any attempt at defining graffiti and street art ultimately subject to exceptions and contradictions, and yet unpacking these terms affords a greater understanding of their distinct and overlapping terrains.

"A whole miserable subculture": Defining graffiti writing[14]

The emergence and evolution of graffiti writing in the second half of the twentieth century has had the strongest influence on the contemporary incarnations of graffiti and street art (Gastman and Neelon, 2010; Lewisohn, 2008; Waclawek, 2011).[15] Although a vernacular art form that draws from numerous precedents of urban inscription and visual communication, from gang graffiti to advertising, "graffiti writing" signifies a unique practice distinct from the broader, historically-based applications of the term "graffiti". Derived from the Greek *graphein* (to write) and Italian s*graffito* (scratched drawings), "graffiti" technically refers to any unsanctioned mark made on a surface, from cave paintings to lavatory graffiti, political declarations to love hearts carved into tree trunks.[16] Today however, while retaining this broader usage, "graffiti" is commonly understood as the signature-based urban painting tradition that most cohesively emerged in North America in the 1960s and 70s, most

[13] Tristan Manco, *Street Logos*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2005, p. 7

[14] The phrase used by the mother of graffiti writer Skeme to memorably describe her son's pastime in the 1983 film *Style Wars*.

[15] Carlo McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in Jeffrey Deitch, with Roger Gastman and Aaron Rose, *Art in the Streets,* New York/Los Angeles, Skira Rizzoli/MOCA, 2011, p. 20-21; Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 20

[16] Lee Beard and Rebecca Morrill, eds., *The Twenty-First Century Art Book*, London/New York, Phaidon, 2014, p. 299

famously on New York's subway trains, before migrating around the world.[17] "Graffiti" was originally applied pejoratively by authorities, and practitioners initially favoured the more straight-ahead description "writing". Over time, "graffiti" has been accepted and adopted by both those wielding spray-paint and markers, and the wider public, although in each case often loaded with contrasting emotions and connotations. It was in New York, amongst the explosion of hip-hop that graffiti transformed into a more defined artistic sub-culture. As early graffiti historian Jack Stewart noted: "It created a flourishing visual dialogue within a large group of young people, as opposed to the solitary practice of writing graffiti had been in the past."[18] Publications that documented the culture's emergence in New York, such as Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper's book *Subway Art* (1984) and Tony Silver and Chalfant's film *Style Wars* (1983), were important factors in graffiti's global dissemination, with tattered copies and static-encoded VHS recordings passed from hand-to-hand. While graffiti cultures flourished around the world, often drawing on unique local conditions and histories, and developing specific and identifiable formal and stylistic identities, New York's subway graffiti has remained a strong and evident influence.

Graffiti writing is a defined subculture with specific stylistic and behavioural traits developed and sustained across generations, from the calligraphic flow of a "tag" (the stylised signature of a graffiti writer, and perhaps the most basic element of the culture), or the repetitive rhythm of a "throw-up" (a quickly executed work made up of an outline and a fill), or the angular letterforms of a larger "piece" (short for "masterpiece", a more developed and detailed name painting) **(Fig. 2.1)**, to the unique jargon, organisational structures of writing "crews" (a collective of graffiti writers), and unwritten etiquette of respect and hierarchy.[19] The goal of the graffiti writer is to "get up"; to gain fame by writing their adopted moniker on the surfaces of the city (and increasingly further afield), from sidewalks to rooftops. As Norman Mailer declared in a 1974 essay, the name is the "faith of graffiti".[20] The name acts as the symbol of a writer's presence and identity, but also the vessel for the display of

[17] While the New York subway graffiti writers were most prominently documented, Philadelphia writers such as Cornbread and Cool Earl in the 1960s are often credited as significant forebears of the developing culture. Indeed, various local influences have also been acknowledged, with early twentieth century Los Angeles Latino gang graffiti positioned as an important precedent for West Coast graffiti writers.

[18] Jack Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*, New York, Melcher Media/Abrams, 2009, p. 19. It should be noted that although graffiti is entrenched as one of the four elements of hip hop (alongside Djing, MCing and breakdancing), some early graffiti writers were more interested in psychedelic music than rap. As a result, graffiti's relationship with hip hop is somewhat complex and made more so by the variants of graffiti found as part of skateboarding and punk subcultures. The place of graffiti within hip-hop is made clear in the documentary *Style Wars* (1983), and Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (London, Ebury Press, 2005), in which Chang describes early graffiti writers as "the advance guard of a new generation" (p. 73), an acknowledgement of writing culture's pre-existing status.

[19] A glossary is included as an appendix to this work (Appendix 3), providing further definitions.

[20] Norman Mailer (text), Jon Naar (photographs), *The Faith of Graffiti*, New York, Wasted Talent/HarperCollins, 2009, p. 130

style in its calligraphic form, from tag to piece. Writing one's name is therefore both a visual and conceptual response to the experience of the surrounding social and physical environments. Graffiti is an act of rebellion and transgression, a challenge to private ownership. As Gastman and Neelon explain in *The History of American Graffiti* (2010), graffiti writers "are rebelling against every force that tells them who to be and how to act…"[21] Therefore, the graffiti writer's name is a challenge, an attachment to a transgressive act, a taunt to authority and a boast to other graffiti writers about one's ability to do so. This sense of rebellion ensures graffiti has maintained a strong outsider nature, even as a highly visible feature of global cityscapes.

Many writers have situated graffiti as a subculture that celebrates its own internalised values and the ability to confuse and upset those unaccustomed to its intricacies, notably through its visual form (Austin 2001; Macdonald 2002). While early graffiti writers, such as Philadelphia's Cornbread or New York's Taki 183, employed legible, simplified styles, graffiti's formal development has created evermore elaborate and complicated designs, from interlocking letterforms to popping drop shadows **(Fig. 2.2)**.[22] Marc and Sara Schiller of New York based street art website *Wooster Collective* have highlighted the internalised culture of graffiti writing in contrast to the often more accessible imagery of street art:

> Graffiti is a code. Graffiti isn't easy to decipher unless you're in the world of the artist. The whole point of doing graffiti is to encode your name in a very unique style that not many people can decipher…[23]

Even if at times still difficult to decipher, graffiti is now a familiar urban typography, found on alleyway walls and billboard advertisements alike. Yet, its visual language is primarily designed for an audience of peers, and while it occurs as a very public expression, it is essentially a private conversation between initiated participants. Macdonald has observed that graffiti writers "use differences between those who do not share their experiences and views to evoke a feeling of 'us and them'."[24] Graffiti writers are concerned with the ubiquity, location, and daring of a tag, throw-up or piece, while technical and formal aspects are based upon what Cedar Lewisohn, curator of the Tate Modern exhibition *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution* (2008), describes as the culture's "own rubric", rather than what is learnt at an art school or admired inside an art museum.[25] Fab 5 Freddy, an important "connector" of the uptown graffiti writers and the downtown art world in New York in the late seventies and early

[21] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 31
[22] Not all graffiti writers have adopted such styles, with contemporary graffiti ranging from the highly stylised to the highly readable (often produced with paint rollers rather than spray paint, affording a greater scale and legibility).
[23] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 63
[24] Macdonald, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity…*, p. 156
[25] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 63

eighties, noted that while he recognised graffiti as fitting into a wider art historical discourse, including classical periods, Dada, Futurism, Pop Art and more (a view he shared with figures such as Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat), he felt "kind of like an egghead around some of the other graffiti guys from the subway school, because I knew what they did was a purer thing… it was a natural thing."[26]

While graffiti writing exists within specific and largely self-referential stylistic and conceptual rubrics, it has also become more expansive with the rise of street art, even if such changes are viewed with scepticism by traditionalists. Many graffiti artists have displayed and developed interests in non-traditional imagery and techniques that have blurred the definition of graffiti's style and visual lexicon.[27] Gastman and Neelon have recounted the links between graffiti writing and the emergence of street art:

> In the booming New York art scene of the 1970s and early 1980s, many artists took cues from the anything goes chaos of the street and subway graffiti around them and ventured out, as well. As the 1980s gave way to the 1990s, a handful of graffiti writers- most notably San Francisco's TWIST and New York's COST and REVS- began to work in ways decidedly outside the parameters of traditional graffiti, adding postering, sculpture, murals, and other media to the ink and spray paint standbys. These experimental graffiti writers were simply trying to expand the parameters of graffiti, but with their work, they opened the floodgates for present-day street art.[28]

Other artists have refined their aerosol technique into photorealism, pushed letterforms in astounding new directions, or specialised in creating characters, portraits and landscapes in incredible detail, pushing once supporting elements into more prominent roles. Such alternative approaches, in many cases retaining the central presence of the name while challenging the culture's stylistic and technical preoccupations, provide a bridge between the traditions of graffiti that are still strongly defended by many, and the expansive reach of street art.

"If a cop comes, I'm doing street art": Defining street art[29]

Lewisohn locates street art as a "sub-genre" of graffiti writing, but despite the important influence and overlap, he acknowledges the distinct and separate concerns of street art as a less defined movement often perceived in different terms.[30] Many street artists acknowledge the explicit

[26] Elisabeth Sussman, *Keith Haring*, New York, Whitney Museum of Art, 1997, p. 159
[27] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 63
[28] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 380
[29] This phrase is borrowed from a wall painting by Australian artist Lush
[30] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 15

inspiration of graffiti writing, including veterans such as Blek le Rat, who was exhilarated by the subway graffiti he saw while on vacation in 1970s New York, which led him to the stencilling technique as a more suitable approach for urban Paris.[31] For others, graffiti was the initial spark and grounding from which their practice has developed. Surveys of street artists invariably include figures with either explicit roots in traditional graffiti writing, or who openly admit to being inspired by the example of graffiti culture, but were compelled to develop more personally significant styles and methods (Lazarides, 2008; Mathieson, Tàpies and Arango, 2009; Schacter, 2013). Yet while this connection is continually recognised by those within these cultures, much public perception fails to grasp the relationship. Graffiti is more often vilified as vandalism and a social blight, while street art is often celebrated and championed as a symbol of urban renewal. Indeed, even graffiti in its traditional letterform is often identified as street art so as to avoid the inherent associations of criminality and social blight.

Graffiti writing's undeniable influence upon street art is evident in the term "post-graffiti". As Manco has noted, the term (alongside the similar "neo-graffiti") attempts to describe a "street art and a graffiti scene in flux between established ideas and new directions."[32] The term "post-graffiti" arose in the early 1980s, most notably as the title of a 1983 show at New York's Sidney Janis Gallery. Robert S. Drew has noted that the catalogue to the Janis show assured readers that "post-graffiti" did not signify a movement away from working outside, but signified an "extension in scope and concept of their spontaneous imagery."[33] "Post-graffiti" has since been utilised by writers and artists to describe the diverse and expansive practices within graffiti and street art, both on the streets and inside galleries, while acknowledging the important and ongoing influence of graffiti writing (Dickens, 2008; Waclawek, 2011).[34] Importantly, Waclawek has noted that the use of the prefix "post-" does not "imply that signature graffiti writing has been surpassed or left behind", but rather suggests the role of graffiti writing in creating a shared cultural and creative landscape in which a range of artists now operate, many shifting between traditional graffiti and expanding practices.[35] But while "post-graffiti" is a helpful term in considering contemporary urban art, it does not retain the widespread currency

[31] Sybille Prou and King Adz, *Blek le Rat: Getting through the walls*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2008
[32] Manco, *Street Logos*, p. 7. Neo-graffiti is problematic due to its implication that street art is a form of 'new' graffiti, rather than suggesting a landscape irrevocably influenced by graffiti.
[33] Robert S. Drew, "Graffiti as Public and Private Art", in Larry Gross, ed., *On the Margins of the Art World,* Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, p. 234
[34] Auckland artists, including Askew One and Benjamin Work, along with gallerist Olivia Laita, have coined the term 'Post-Graffiti Pacific' to specifically refer to artists whose work is infused with the influence of their backgrounds in graffiti and is engaged with issues around Pacific identity. (http://shop.olivialaitagallery.com/about, accessed June 9, 2015)
[35] Luke Dickens, "Placing post-graffiti: the journey of the Peckham Rock", *Cultural Geographies*, number 15, 2008, http://cgj.sagepub.com/content/15/4/471, accessed October 12, 2013; Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 29

and acceptance of "street art". Manco has noted that such alternatives, which often draw on more specific influences and require more explanation, "are rarely used", and despite the inherent problems in its broad nature, "street art" remains the most common signifier of this expansive movement.[36]

Yet if graffiti and street art are unavoidably entwined, there are also important differences. Whereas graffiti is relatively tightly defined and exclusive, and consistent in its visual form, street art is less cohesive, more open-natured, and often more individualised.[37] Indeed, the suffixes of each term; graffiti *writing* and street *art*, might provide telling distinctions in their public reception, and indeed in how participants view themselves (Dickens, 2008). Street art targets a wider audience than graffiti, attempting to initiate moments of engagement with an unsuspecting public in a manner different to graffiti's internal dialogues. Marc and Sara Schiller suggest this is a key difference: "Street art doesn't have any of that hidden code [of graffiti]; there are no hidden messages; you either connect with it or you don't. There's no mystery there."[38] This is predominantly achieved through a more accessible iconographic and typographic coda of imagery and text in comparison to graffiti's often highly stylised calligraphy. The tag is replaced by an expansive vocabulary of characters, symbols, signs, patterns, abstractions and text that extends beyond the name. However, as Riikka Kuittenen has noted, even if there was a lack of mystery, street art's references to "art history, current affairs and famous images required a certain degree of semiotic savvy from the accidental audience…"[39] Indeed, many street artists operate with an open source approach, recycling, subverting and remixing popular culture. Street art also expanded the techniques employed by artists; the spray can and marker pen were joined by stencil plates, posters and wheat paste, stickers and even craft and sculptural materials **(Figs. 2.3-2.7)**. Much like graffiti's DIY nature of repurposed nozzles and homemade inks, street art's tactics have often been born from economic, material and procedural necessity. While contemporary street art's roots lie in graffiti writing culture, the term also connects to a broad lineage of influence. "Street art" has been in use since at least the 1970s, but as Gastman and Neelon note, largely without the popularity (or popular perceptions) that it has experienced since around the turn of the Millennium.[40] Artist John Fekner (who curated the 1978 exhibition *Detective Show* in outdoor Queens, New York and included the words "street museum" in the invitation) recounted to Lewisohn that when the term "street art" started "to get around" in the late seventies and early eighties, he and his peers laughed

[36] Manco, *Street Logos*, p. 7

[37] While graffiti crews are common, street artists often work individually. However, some crews might include a variety of artists, a further sign of the evolving nature of graffiti and street art cultures, and other artists operate as a duo, adopting a shared moniker, such as New Zealand's BMD, or as looser affiliations, like Auckland's Cut Collective.

[38] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 63

[39] Riikka Kuittenen, *Street Craft: Guerrilla Gardening/Yarnbombing/Light Graffiti/ Street Sculpture/ And More*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2015, p. 6

[40] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 380

at the term due to its implied elitism, explaining that in the minds of many: "If you had a degree, you did "street art" as opposed to graffiti."[41] In the minds of some, this perception remains today.

"Street art" is a contentious term declined by many artists, some in defiance of categorisation, others staunchly identifying as graffiti writers. Artist Shepard Fairey has explained that the desire to categorise is inherently antithetical to a rebellious culture: "I find it humorous that fans of street art, a culture that is supposedly about rule breaking, have established so many rules for it."[42] However, Lewisohn declares that "street art" has found validity as perhaps the most workable term available to cover a difficult, broad and evolving terrain.[43] Today, it is used in both scholarly and everyday discussions. But despite widespread recognition, upon reflection locating any singular definition is almost impossible. Lewisohn suggests "street art" benefits from its elasticity; the term is "wide enough not to strangle any one individual, but precise enough to eliminate other works that don't fall into the category."[44] And yet, what is excluded? As Carlo McCormick reasons in his essay "The Writing on the Wall" from Deitch's *Art in the Streets* publication; "Street art today is too multifarious and international to be reduced to a single set of strategies or one overriding agenda."[45] From stencils, stickers and sculptures to wheat-pastes, wall paintings and digital interventions, from the figurative to the abstract, with influences from fine art to comic books and commercial advertising, it is impossible to neatly package. Furthermore if street art once almost exclusively referred to art produced illegally or without permission, the term is now also increasingly used to describe permissioned and commissioned works. Exhibitions of "street art" are a common occurrence in galleries and museums, and in city streets around the world "street artists" produce large scale mural work that might be considered closer to "public art" in their size and exposure.

If "street art" (much like "public art") fails to signify any evident stylistic, material, or thematic consistency, or even legal status, perhaps the word "street" provides an associative and metaphorical framework that informs our interpretation of the art included under this broad term. While the term immediately invokes the significant relationship between the art work and the physical environment it inhabits, it also suggests a social concept, a sense of popularity, everyday accessibility and therefore, anti-elitism. The streets provide a site to both embrace and contest, where art can be immediately accessible but also given additional meaning by the surroundings.[46] Cultural theorist Rebecca Solnit,

[41] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, pp. 15-18
[42] Shepard Fairey, *Covert to Overt: The Underground/Overground Art of Shepard Fairey*, New York, Rizzoli, 2015, p. 13
[43] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, pp. 15-18
[44] Ibid., p. 15
[45] McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, p. 24
[46] While street suggests site, it is also used to describe work produced off the streets, highlighting the associative element of the term "street art".

in her history of walking *Wanderlust* (2000), suggests that "street" conjures up particular associations, reasoning that the word:

> …has a rough, dirty magic to it, summoning up the low, the common, the erotic, the dangerous, the revolutionary. A man of the streets is only a populist, but a woman of the streets is, like a streetwalker, a seller of her sexuality. Street kids are urchins, beggars, and runaways, and the new term street person describes those who have no other home. Street-smart means someone wise in the ways of the city and well able to survive in it, while "to the streets" is the classic cry of urban revolution, for the streets are where people become the public and where their power resides. The street means life in the heady currents of the urban river in which everyone and everything can mingle. It is exactly this social mobility, this lack of compartments and distinctions, that gives the street its danger and its magic...[47]

Through Solnit's description street art (and indeed street culture more generally[48]) can be understood within this sense of social mobility and accessibility. As such, "street art" affords a distinction from other incarnations of art, both public and private, which are often charged with elitism or official banality. This sentiment is echoed by Anne Pasternak in her essay "Just Do It" in *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*: "Let's be honest: the term public art conjures ideas of banal, even dreadful, permanent displays in municipal buildings form airports to courts."[49] Rather than the monumental or conceptual (and often expensive) approaches of "public art", street art, in all its myriad forms, suggests a connection to the city as an open site of possibility, communication and engagement, where established cultural and civic authority can be challenged. The streets provide a site where art can be democratised without the means or status necessary to produce large-scale "public art", allowing artists to put their work in front of people, albeit an often unsuspecting audience. Schacter has placed graffiti and street art within the broad umbrella term independent public art.[50] Schacter, drawing from the theorist Javier Abarca, positions independent public art as any work produced without institutional support in the public sphere.[51] While Schacter places graffiti and street art centrally within this definition, he acknowledges independent public art's ability to allow for a wider conception that both includes the specific histories of graffiti and street art, but also increasingly expansive approaches, from performance work to ephemeral interventions.[52] If street art provides a sense of this democratic and independent nature, and graffiti writing maintains a strongly

[47] Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust – A History of Walking*, New York, Penguin, 2000, p. 176
[48] One might afford the same qualities to the current popularity of street food.
[49] Anne Pasternak, "Just Do It", in Ethel Seno, ed., with Carlo McCormick, Marc & Sara Schiller, *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, Köln, Taschen, 2010, p. 307
[50] Schacter's use of the term might be most suitably considered as a description of an approach to making art, rather than application to artists.
[51] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 9
[52] Ibid.

outsider identity, it is no surprise both have flirted with and been a problematic fit within art historical narratives and the art world.

Graffiti and street art within the discipline of art history

While this work inevitably engages with a range of social issues due the earthquake context, it primarily accepts graffiti and street art as a part of the art historical canon, and as such of artistic discourses. However, this inclusion is undeniably complicated. McCormick has declared that: "Art as it occurs on the streets is an "other" history. Inherently anti-institutional, it has never fit well within the academy or the museum; basically free, it has consistently had a problematic relationship with the art market."[53] Harlan Levey has noted that while street art at the turn of the Millennium was not seriously considered by the art world, it was also not interested in reciprocating, preferring instead to "have a public conversation…", and as such was more akin to "…other contemporary practices that sought creative counter reformation between the 1990s and the new millennium… such as those that led to Napster, Open Source, the Battle for Seattle, or *No Logo* becoming a bestseller. It did not belong to discussions of art and many of the traditions that it associated with boasted the same outsider position."[54] Yet graffiti and street art have now found themselves in a strange position. As British art writer Will Gompertz briefly admitted towards the end of *What Are You Looking At?*, his 2013 survey of modern art, graffiti and street art have now been accepted as a part of the story of modern and contemporary art.[55] Yet this (begrudging) acceptance has only been relatively recent, and for many art writers, graffiti and street art remain peripheral participants in the narratives of art history. Indeed, this admittance is still somewhat strained and faces dissent from both sides; strongly self-identifying cultures that pride themselves on defining their own terms on the one hand, and the perceived elitism of the art world on the other. Graffiti and street artists, and the movements they represent, inform and reflect the expanded practices of contemporary artists, and tread the line between alleyways, cultural institutions and auction houses. Furthermore, even the selection of certain graffiti and street artists as representative of these cultures is problematic. Harlan Levey, editor-in-chief of *Modart,* declared in his contribution to *We Own the Night*, a publication documenting the *Underbelly Project*, that while graffiti and street artists had entered the ranks of art history, which artists and for which

[53] McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, p. 19
[54] Harlan Levey, "The Art of Rebelling", in Workhorse and Pac, *We Own the Night: The Art of the Underbelly Project*, New York, Rizzoli International, 2010, p. 234
[55] Will Gompertz, *What Are You Looking At?: The Surprising, Shocking, and Sometimes Strange Story of 150 Years of Modern Art*, London, Viking, 2012, p. 392

reasons remained unclear, concluding that "(t)he whole thing is still too ripe for real analysis."[56] Yet while the *who* and *why* of this canonisation remains complicated, graffiti and street art undoubtedly provide rich fields of analysis and intrigue for art historical discussion, both challenging and reaffirming many of the traditions of the discipline, from provenance and authorship to modes of exhibition.

Despite early, and largely fleeting, popularity in Manhattan art galleries in the late seventies and early eighties (a topic covered in detail by Margo Thompson's 2009 work *American Graffiti*), graffiti's single-minded self-determination, the difficulties in translating work from street to gallery, and the continuing social stigma as vandalism-slash-art, have ensured a peripheral position in art history. Indeed, when most art historians use the term "graffiti art", they are more commonly referring to the work of Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf or Jean-Michel Basquiat (artists with art school backgrounds and connections within the art world), rather than traditional graffiti writing and artists more concerned with the culture's specific concerns.[57] Lewisohn cites this misleading categorisation as a reflection of the art world's exclusion of graffiti writing in favour of artists who more comfortably fit within "art world" discourses.[58] Indeed as McCormick has suggested, in hindsight, figures such as Haring might more aptly be considered early participants in what would become known as street art.[59]

As a result of this misrepresentation and marginalisation within art historical discourses, graffiti has instead been prominently documented on its own terms, interested in its own histories and cultural identities rather than institutional art world narratives (Gastman and Teri, 2007; O'Donnell, 2007; Gastman and Neelon, 2011). While graffiti remains, at least to some degree by choice, on the margins of the art world, street art has faced less vilification, and has perhaps been more readily accepted in art world discourses. While there are a number of external influences, from punk to skateboarding, street art's acknowledgment within art history and increased scholarly interest (as well as the diversity of practitioners), has created a reconsidered and expanded lineage of influence, acknowledging the artistic precedence of artists more readily included by art historians. Street art, alongside the evident influence of graffiti, punk, skate and popular culture, is now positioned as having inherited elements from artists and movements such as The Dadaists, The Situationists, Fluxus, Gordon Matta-Clark, Alan Kaprow, the Italian Arte Povera movement, and perhaps most notably Pop Art, including the neo-Pop

[56] Levey, "The Art of Rebelling", in *We Own the Night*, p. 235
[57] Ian Chilvers, *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 251. It is notable that there is no entry for "Street Art", indicating the growth in popularity of the term since the turn of the Millennium.
[58] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 18; Drew, "Graffiti as Public and Private Art", in *On the Margins of the Art World*, p. 236
[59] Carlo McCormick, "Keith Haring: Legacy of a Lifetime", in *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.167, December 2014, pp. 48-59

and Pop Surrealist movements (Lewisohn, 2008; Seno et al, 2010; Schacter, 2013).[60] These influences have not pushed graffiti aside, but have extended wider readings of the diverse approaches to making art in the streets.

While graffiti and street artists have had a longer, albeit uneven, presence in dealer galleries, more recently larger institutions have also taken an interest. The increasing inclusion of graffiti and street art within expanding western art historical discourses is evident in an institutional interest, exemplified in significant exhibitions such as the Tate Modern's *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution* (2008), *Art in the Streets* at Los Angeles' MOCA, and The National Gallery of Australia's *Space Invaders*. These exhibitions have served as notable presentations to audiences, which while aware of their presence, largely lacked an understanding of their specific histories and narratives, while also suggesting and unveiling connections between these forms and the influences, both artistic and cultural that can be exemplified within their development. While such shows provide institutional legitimisation, this acknowledgment has not been easily earned; graffiti and street art have often been dismissed as popular, unsophisticated and one-dimensional by art world commentators.[61] While *Art in the Streets* was purported to be the best attended show in MOCA's history, with over 200,000 visitors, art world figures were still dismissive. MOCA trustee Lenore Greenberg illustrated this attitude in a 2013 *Vanity Fair* article: "I saw it. They keep referring to the show that had the biggest attendance in the history of MOCA. I doubt that very seriously. And the people who came were not people who were going to turn out to be donors or continue their attendance. It was a one-off." Such comments reveal influence of markets and institutions in the construction of art world narratives, but also a sentiment that graffiti and street art are not full-fledged participants of art world importance, but fads that will pass and recede back to the shadows.

In her book *Graffiti and Street Art* (2011), Waclawek acknowledges the subjects might subvert entrenched art historical preoccupations. Waclawek points out that graffiti and street art offer the ability to challenge art history's established categories of style, subject and signature:

> For a field of study that accesses its objects of inquiry first through form, content, style and medium, and second through their social context, meaning, artist, patron and viewer, the graffiti and post-graffiti movements provide extraordinarily rich narratives. Uncovering the socio-political intentions of these

[60] Babington, *Space Invaders*, p. 25. It is also notable to consider the development of 'urban contemporary' as a term that reflects the presence of graffiti and street artists in the gallery world, and the influence of these cultures on studio-produced work.

[61] Indeed, as part of the Tate Modern's 2008 show *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, the museum presented a podcast where participants discussed the question "Is Street Art a bit boring?", seemingly an extension of the persistent dismissal of the genre by art world scholars and critics

> movements, and investigating the works formally and contextually, proves fundamental to the works themselves and to their viewers.[62]

The combination of contemporary art history's increasing interest in non-traditional, non-institutional and even non-material approaches to art-making, alongside the evident aspects of socio-spatial concerns, performance, ephemerality, materiality, authorship and appropriation that are immediately apparent in graffiti and street art, provide ample opportunity for art historical enquiry. Indeed, graffiti and street artists are increasingly included in more broadly conceived contemporary art surveys and exhibitions, signifying an inclusion within the preoccupations of art writers, curators and historians.[63] Such surveys include a number of artists with backgrounds in graffiti and street art, and suggest the influence of these approaches upon the field of contemporary art, from art interested in various scales, to the use of up-cycled and non-traditional materials (Beard and Morrill, (eds.), 2014; Manco, 2014). And yet, this inclusion is also often veiled, and distinct from the discussion of graffiti and street art on their own terms, instead indicating the shifting boundaries and interests of the art world and the entrance of individual artists into this arena. Acceptance within art historical narratives has also resulted in the tendency to follow certain art historical traditions that may not fit graffiti and street art's unique nature. While cultural and sociological approaches have often considered graffiti and street art as broad, and often anonymous, social phenomena that engage with public space, art historical discussions have increasingly focussed on the body of work of artists (both individual and collective, in the street and in exhibition spaces). The construction of a canon of identities matches art history's preference for identifiable authorship, but such an approach might be seen to be at odds with graffiti and street arts' often pseudonymous, outsider and interventionist nature, raising questions around the complex relationship between artist, work, location and audience.[64]

Not just pretty pictures: Social issues and the connection to place

Even with graffiti and street art's inclusion in art world and art historical narratives, the relationship to place, both physical and social, provides an important, and largely unique, ongoing thread of discussion. Waclawek has identified the importance of situating graffiti and street art within their

[62] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 192

[63] Manco, who has written extensively on graffiti and street art specifically, has published several works that while covering a wider scope of art and artists, reveal the influence of graffiti and street art practices on the contemporary art landscape: *Raw + Material = Art*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2012; *Big Art, Small Art*, Thames & Hudson, New York, 2014.

[64] Although as sanctioned works of graffiti and street art are increasingly common, this issue is changing and much literature approaches artists' oeuvres, from monographs to compilations. (Schacter, 2013; Mathieson and Tàpies, 2009)

contextual setting: "Graffiti cultures, as sophisticated forms of communication, both shape and are shaped by their social contexts."[65] Writers consistently frame their discussions of graffiti and street art within specific settings, often investigating subcultural groupings within certain geographic locations (Kramer, 2010; McAuliffe, 2013), a concern of less interest here, where a more singular event is the primary context. While graffiti and street art often comment on specific political issues and global events (Tàpies and Mathieson, 2007), they are also inherently connected to a raft of social issues through their occupation of public space, even when such specific commentary is absent. Graffiti and street art are forms of public expression and visual communication, but in their material and conceptual nature they also serve to reflect and engage their surrounding environments. Graffiti and street art can be contextualised within the physical and social experience of urban space of the later twentieth century and the influence and responses such spaces engender. This relationship is made explicit in the blanket term "urban art", which is utilised by a number of commentators, although without the popularity of either graffiti or street art (Seno et al, 2010).[66] While graffiti and street art have encroached into both suburban and even rural spheres, "urban art" refers to the historical influence of the modern city as the landscape in which these forms of expression have developed as responses to the sensory and social environment. The use of the term "urban art" affords an expansive approach to art-making that extends beyond graffiti and street art and into performative and conceptual practices.[67] Cities have become increasingly urbanised and densely populated, and graffiti and street art reveal a range of issues relevant to the experience of such complex spaces. Manco has suggested that the iconographic nature of much street art imagery is a reflection and subversion of the language of signs so prevalent in urban environments (even suggesting the term "brandalism" as an alternative descriptor).[68] Similarly, graffiti writing can be considered a form of personal, albeit non-commercial, advertising, an inverted alternative to the ubiquitous corporate images and names around a city.

Graffiti writing has long been considered by sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, criminologists and geographers, amidst other scholars often more interested in the culture as a

[65] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 192

[66] Although "urban art" is primarily used to describe forms of visual art, its wider reach can also include activities such as skateboarding and *parkour* or free-running, both of which subvert the expected functions of civic infrastructures, further reflecting the entangled and important relationship between these activities and interventions and the environment in which they occur.

[67] Indeed, Seno's *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, includes references to the happenings of Alan Kaprow, and the work of David Hammons amongst other examples not traditionally considered graffiti or street artists.

[68] Manco, *Street Logos*, p. 7

reflection of contemporary urban society more than a developed artistic culture.[69] This view of graffiti and street art has been a long held interest (Castleman, 1982).[70] As cultural theorist Ricardo Campos has declared, New York's graffiti writing culture was at least initially viewed as an "urban manifestation that has been subjected mainly to sociological and anthropological enquiry…"[71] According to cultural geographer Luke Dickens, as urban manifestations of place, graffiti and street art engage with issues of identity politics, territoriality, urban decline, transgression, resistance of authority, and suggestions of possible ways of reading, writing and re-imagining cities.[72] This sociological and cultural approach, with varying emphasis on graffiti's artistic and visual analysis, has situated research within themes of identity, gender, class, legality, deviance, territoriality and mobility (Macdonald, 2001; Austin, 2001).[73] Dickens, in distinguishing between "post-graffiti" and traditional graffiti, has noted the way in which graffiti writing has been considered both as "performance and mode of representation in order to investigate broader urban conditions and experiences."[74] As such, graffiti has been discussed as both formally, and as an act in itself, as a representation of its conditions of creation. In each case, graffiti is loaded with associative meanings of urban existence and experience.

Within this sociological framework, graffiti in particular has been viewed by commentators as both art and crime, with the latter often considered the more definitive. As different cities and countries take varying practical and legal approaches to the "problem" of uninvited urban art, the discourse of legality and legitimacy remains an enduring interest for writers (Lewisohn 2008; Pasternak in Seno et al, 2010; Young in Babington, 2010; Waclawek, 2011; Young 2014). As Gastman and Neelon have declared, "Long before it developed into an art, graffiti was – and remains – a crime."[75] Graffiti's public affront to private property inevitably stirs anger, as Gastman and Neelon explain further: "No other art movement in human history has so thoroughly confounded the deeply held concepts of public and

[69] Early graffiti writing, such as that found in Philadelphia by the likes of Cornbread or Cool Earl, and the likes of Taki 183 in New York in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were not highly stylized, retaining a sense of legibility, but as the pastime became increasingly popular, it was necessary to stand out from the sea of names by size, location and importantly, style. However, one might also consider the relative plain style of early writing to be another reason for their sociological study; a perceived lack of aesthetic concern.

[70] Castleman admits in his preface that his concern was description of the urban youth subculture rather than analysis; finding out *what* graffiti writers were doing rather than *why*. (Castleman, *Getting Up- Subway Graffiti in New York*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, MIT Press, 1982, p. X)

[71] Ricardo Campos, "Graffiti writer as superhero", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16: 155, 2013, http://ecs.sagepub.com/content/16/2/155, accessed October 19, 2013

[72] Dickens, "Placing post-graffiti…", *Cultural Geographies*, accessed October 12, 2013

[73] Although it is notable that Austin juxtaposes graffiti's existence as "perhaps the most important art movement of the late twentieth century" with the response of New York City's "war on graffiti" to uncover issues around the "democratic aesthetics of shared public space." Joe Austin, *Taking the Train – How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001, p. 6; Macdonald, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity…*, p. 2

[74] Dickens, "Placing post-graffiti…", *Cultural Geographies*, accessed October 12, 2013

[75] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 23

private property…"[76] Graffiti, and to a lesser extent street art, remain framed in many discourses as something to eradicate, to solve, or to harness and utilise in "positive" ways. However, they might also be viewed as inevitable responses to the privatisation and capitalisation of our societies and cultures, their removal an impossible dream within a landscape of corporate imagery and private boundaries. As Lewisohn suggests, the barbarians are at the gates with marker pens, spray paint and buckets of glue, and we are, at least inadvertently, complicit in their invitation.[77] Initially the question of graffiti as art or crime was a scholarly preoccupation, raising issues surrounding the definition, purpose and role of art in society. While the legal or illegal status of a work might have once been used to affirm or deny its position as graffiti or street art, such a distinction is today more complicated, problematized by the popularity of festivals, programmes and other "legitimising" and increasingly commercial relationships that continue to be described under these titles.[78] This development, which remains strongly connected to its appearance in public space, can be seen as both a progression of the artists, but also as a civic solution to these forms as "social problems", and as such reflect a view of the surrounding environment and elements of its accessibility and control.

While writers have often discussed graffiti and street art within generic urban frameworks (Lewisohn, 2008; Waclawek, 2011), others have located their investigation of these forms within more specific settings of time and place, from surveys that span a wide terrain, to work that is focussed on singular locations and the conditions of those environments. Despite graffiti and street art's global commonalities, such localised studies have revealed the unique variants evident in specific environments, from the amalgamation with local cultural histories, to socio-political and economic influences. This connection between art and place is perhaps most explicitly evident in the enduring consideration of New York's subway graffiti. The stories and personalities that were introduced in *Style Wars*, *Subway Art* and other early documentations (such as Kirchheimer's 1981 film *Stations of the Elevated*), have continued to provide insight into how the surrounding environment inspired an art form that has sustained and flourished over following decades (Chalfant and Jenkins, 2013; Stewart, 2015). In the numerous discussions of the proliferation in the seventies and eighties of the graffiti carried around New York, for example, commentators have particularly noted its relationship to socio-

[76] Ibid.
[77] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 87
[78] Graffiti writing is found on clothing, in advertising, across packaging, and any other number of commercial productions. Yet, while often attempting to suggest "urban cool", the appropriation of graffiti lettering styles by graphic designers can often fall flat and seem cheesy, as type designer Christian Schwartz declared in the preface to Christian P. Acker's *Flip the Script*: "Over the years, I've seen a lot of bad typefaces based on graffiti, mostly watered down versions of early '80s New York styles, and I once declared in an interview something along the lines of 'I've never seen a graffiti font that works, and everyone trying to make one should probably just give up now.'" (Acker, *Flip the Script: A Guidebook for Aspiring Vandals & Typographers*, Berkeley, Gingko Press, 2013, p. 5)

economic and socio-political conditions of the city (Castleman, 1982; Silver and Chalfant, 1984; Austin, 2001; Stewart, 2009; Chalfant and Jenkins, 2014). As curator Jeffrey Deitch explains, graffiti's emergence occurred within a period of political and economic problems, rather than prosperity and expansion. With the city bankrupt and feeling a sense of abandonment, the physical environment was an apt setting for the appearance of graffiti writing:

> The Bronx was burning, but for young artists, New York was a creative paradise… empty spaces were plentiful… Much of downtown New York was like an open-air gallery: Artists communicated with one another through tags, drawings, and concrete poetry on walls and doorways. The subway system became an artistic link between neighborhoods.[79]

While Deitch evokes a physical environment of opportunity, he also suggests the unavoidable political and social environment as an overbearing influence. McCormick has even suggested that the bold and brash graffiti writing might be viewed as a "reflexive beautification" of New York's bleak physical infrastructure.[80] The liberation movement of the sixties can also be seen as an influential factor, with graffiti representing an anger aimed at the realities of seventies America. This sentiment is echoed by LSD OM, a graffiti writer from New York's Upper West Side who started painting in the late sixties: "My first impression of why other people were writing was because I felt people were angry… upset that they didn't have a voice in the world, that the government was telling us how it was and how it was going to be, and I think people were too free to let that happen."[81] Sixties and seventies New York served as an incubator for the genesis of graffiti writing, providing a unique setting where numerous socio-political, cultural and even infrastructural elements combined to stimulate an outburst of line and colour unlike any precedent.

As graffiti and street art have infiltrated all corners of the globe, writers have continued to locate their studies within specific settings, providing insight of the global spread of these art forms, but also the unique nuances of various settings, at times illuminating historical, physical and cultural influences (Manco, Lost Art and Neelon, 2005; Gastman and Teri, 2007; O'Donnell, 2007; Grévy, 2008; Gröndahl, 2009; Parry, 2010; Smallman and Nyman, 2011, Munro, 2012).[82] Even publications with a broader scope utilise geographical frameworks to highlight the international nature of graffiti and street art, while also providing a sense of local difference between artists and locations, from cities to continents (Chalfant and Prigoff, 1987; Gastman and Neelon, 2010; Deitch with Rose, Gastman and Seno., 2011;

[79] Jeffrey Deitch, "Art in the Streets", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 10-15
[80] McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 19-25
[81] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 23
[82] Gröndahl's work is admittedly concerned with graffiti in a broader, historical sense, but the influence of signature graffiti and street art practices is evident, a reflection of the global migration of these forms and their merging with local traditions.

Acker, 2013; Schacter, 2013). While such works explore the cumulative physical, technological, social, cultural and economic elements that have facilitated distinct regional qualities and histories, they often focus on the more insular narratives of these cultures and artists, rather than the influence of specific socio-historical events.[83] Despite this connection to place remaining important, in many examples this approach further cements the international nature of graffiti and street art as much as connecting specific locations to unique developments. While the specifics of place are vital to this work, with post-quake Christchurch a key incubator for the rise to prominence of graffiti and street, it is also strongly embedded within the international status of these forms.

Local knowledge: Methodology and writing about Christchurch as a post-disaster city

This thesis approaches the graffiti and street art in post-quake Christchurch from a sociological perspective embedded within the discourses of art history. As I have noted, my research attempts to locate graffiti and street art in Christchurch within broader art historical scholarship in this field and also draws on discourses emerging from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, cultural geography and disaster theory (Hoffman and Oliver-Smith, eds., 2002; Brinkley, 2006; Klein, 2007; Solnit, 2010). Local writing has also been an important source of information. Due to the contemporaneous nature of this work, media coverage and journalistic writing have provided factual and statistical information, exposed a range of events, projects and interventions, and acted as a barometer of the changing public discourses within the post-quake city (much like the graffiti and street art found across the post-quake city). This information, ranging from daily and periodical reporting to a range of larger publications, has covered a spectrum of scientific, social, physical and cultural aspects of the recovery, from geological detail to the impact on historic architecture (The Press, 2010; Moore, ed., 2011; Ansley, 2011; van Beynen, 2012; The Press, 2013). Although often overshadowed by other issues facing the city's recovery, graffiti and street art have been an interesting and relatively regular inclusion in local media, often reflecting a dichotomous discourse around the celebration of sanctioned and recognisable work and the vilification of graffiti writing as blight on a broken landscape.[84] Such divergent coverage has provided a helpful sense of the perception

[83] Both New Orleans and San Francisco are featured in Gastman and Neelon's survey, but in both cases the influence of the respective 1989 earthquake in San Francisco and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans were minimal, a further highlight of the unique nature of this work.

[84] Sam Sachdeva, "Splashes of colour bring life back to quake-weary city", *The Press*, Saturday, October 6, 2012, pp.A8-9; Joelle Dally, "Tagging plague 'more skanksy than Banksy'", *Sunday Star Times*, November 4, 2012, p.A4. It is also interesting to note that while graffiti and street art have regularly been included in

of the varied presence of graffiti and street art within the city, but has also revealed a lack of focussed analysis of their engagement with the specifics of the post-quake landscape.

The impact of the earthquakes has proved an understandably rich source of discussion and analysis, from scientific research and social issues, including the impact on animals (Sessions and Bullock, 2013; Potts and Gadenne, 2014), to celebrations of the city's lost and damaged architecture (Ansley, 2011; Parr, 2015), photographic surveys of the post-quake city (Howey, 2015), the comprehensive documentation of varied post-quake projects (Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., 2012), and more analytical discussion of the complex process of rebuilding a city (Bennett, Johnson, Dann, Reynolds, eds., 2013). While such discussions cover a wide variety of topics, they have also suggested a number of ideas that inform this work, most notably a consideration of the post-quake landscape as layered with meanings. There are numerous references to the presence of art in the city's public spaces, with some documentation of both sanctioned and unsanctioned additions in *Christchurch: The Transitional City Pt IV,* while in *Once in a Lifetime,* Rebecca Macfie's essay "Shock of the View" considers the impact of the *Rise* festival's "Big Wall" murals, and photographic essays depict examples of graffiti, street art and public interventions. Both these publications included findings from my research, principally in the form of data and documentary photographs I had collected. However, these texts were not focussed on the in-depth analysis of graffiti and street art, which is the concern of this dissertation, along with the wider contexts of these art forms. These publications have placed graffiti and street art against the backdrop of the city's earthquake experience and transitional identity, and this dissertation builds on this foundation by considering local trends in relation to pre-existing international legacies and histories of graffiti and street art.

To achieve an important sense of intimacy, it has been necessary to engage directly with a range of primary sources, from interviews with an array of contributors to this creative landscape, to photographing and documenting the art found in the city's streets over a span of almost four years. Dozens of informal interviews and meetings with artists and other figures, from journalists to engineers and event organisers, from Christchurch and further afield, have provided an important base of local knowledge.[85] Those artists interviewed have ranged from graffiti writers and street artists to fine artists, to those who reject any prefix or specific classification, from those with public profiles to those who retain, and revel in, anonymity. Many have long backgrounds in graffiti and street art,

photographic essays, attribution to artists is often ignored, largely described in generic terms, even where the artist is identifiable.

[85] The anonymity of many street artists and graffiti writers proved problematic, from the difficulty in uncovering real identities to the lack of desire to be exposed. As a result, in these cases the engagement with the work becomes more open to interpretation and the experience of the viewer becomes the most important source of analysis.

others were compelled to act by the earthquake experience and the ensuing environment. Approaches span a spectrum of styles, techniques and materials, often flitting between permissioned and unsanctioned productions. While local figures have imparted intimate and personal interpretations of the post-quake landscape as both the city in which they live, and as a site for their art, those from outside the city have offered perceptions free from this immediate experience and have provided reactions to a setting filled with creative possibilities. Conversations have ranged from in-person or email interviews, to time spent personally with figures in various informal forums, from graffiti "battle" competitions to the set-up of exhibitions (while as part of my research I have been involved in numerous projects, I have been somewhat judicious in how this is presented within this work, a decision based on allowing the artists to retain authorship, but also to provide some sense of detachment). While some interviews have been one-off encounters, ongoing relationships that have grown throughout the process of this research have also developed. Through these relationships, I have revisited ideas over time, gauging a sense of change evident in the processes and experiences of artists alongside the evolution of the physical and social landscapes of the city. The information gathered from these interviews and discussions has been in response to both specific questioning and in more anecdotal forms that have developed in a conversational manner. As a result, the influence of these discussions has often suggested further areas of investigation rather than creating direct sources, "sound bites", or samples of data. Therefore, this work contains a limited number of transcribed accounts from artists. This informal quality has reflected the desire to engage with more candour, to know the experiences of artists who work primarily on the streets, understanding both individual motivations and subcultural peculiarities. This approach has afforded more unique insights than would have been available within a more formal method where such interviews might be utilised for statistical analysis.

The primary resource for this thesis is the photographic documentation of the art found in post-quake Christchurch's streets. Photographers and film makers have been important figures in documenting graffiti and street art, particularly in capturing graffiti writing as a young and emerging artistic subculture (Naar and Mailer, 1974; Chalfant and Cooper, 1984; Chalfant and Prigoff, 1987). This is especially important given the often ephemeral nature of such works. A significant part of my primary research in this project involved the documentation of graffiti and street art in the city. Walking the streets of Christchurch on a regular basis, I photographed works of graffiti and street art, creating an archive of over 1000 images of individual pieces, taken between 2011 and 2016.[86] These works reflect

[86] While the concentrated collection of this data began in early 2012, a small sample of pre-existing images and additional images supplied by third parties extended back through 2011. Many of the images collected since 2012 have captured work created in the earlier period, although in some cases specific dates are impossible to

the diverse styles, mediums, locations and relationships of production in graffiti and street art practices, from large sanctioned murals to uninvited and seemingly insignificant scrawls. Many of the images were collated within my research blog whatisthatchch.co.nz, which provides a forum through which the wider public could help in identifying artists and other details of the works.[87] The attribution of work is a difficult proposition when normal avenues of provenance are unavailable. Wherever possible, artists have been credited where they have been identified either by signing their work or through investigation, and in some cases credit has been attributed if unable to be confirmed, in some cases the artist remains unidentified due to the artist's desire for anonymity. In most instances, artist pseudonyms have been used, reflecting the artist's preference.[88] Further details of works are included where relevant or available (for instance, while most works are untitled, I have appropriated visible text in the works as titles, or used titles applied in other sources as accepted identifiers), however this renders complete consistency impossible, revealing the difficulties in dealing with often anonymous and ephemeral art works. Despite the significant number of images, an attempt to capture any definitive and complete overview of the city's graffiti and street art over a sustained period is also impossible due to the disparate, unheralded, guerrilla and ephemeral nature of such interventions.[89] There are unavoidable gaps; countless examples that have appeared and disappeared undocumented. But this is an inevitable reflection of graffiti and street art and the experience of public space, a sense of flux that is a part of the urban environment, even more apparent in a setting that has been broken down and slowly reassembled in the wake of a wide-reaching disaster.

Rather than simply forming a visual resource, the experience of exploring the post-quake city has been an important aspect of the collection of these images, and as such of the research of this work. Indeed, the act of collecting these images informed this work as much as the inspection of the pictures themselves. Purposefully utilising chance and immersion, rather than any strategic, controlled, or mapped manner, the images represent the experience of living in a changed and constantly changing city; exploring and activating space. Any photographic image inevitably represents an author's eye: decisions about the framing, cropping and focus are an inherent part of the process. This is an

confirm. Although this timeframe has been enforced to ensure a defined project, the nature of the images ensures that they form part of an ongoing narrative.

[87] This digital forum was used to gather detail around examples of work, with a small online community contributing missing information, such as the correction of attribution and other factual information. The website proved relatively successful and eventually interest from the University of Canterbury's CEISMIC project and the New Zealand Digital Archives resulted in a number of images being included in these online collections.

[88] Some artists use multiple identities, and in these cases I have applied these various pseudonyms specific to each work.

[89] Although blogs and social media have become strong forums for the exposure of both illegal and permissioned work that may lack more "official" platforms.

important acknowledgement when documenting art that is entwined with its physical and therefore social context. The balance between the art object itself being the focus and the inclusion of the surrounding landscape has been made even more pertinent in the post-quake context of this work. It is therefore important to acknowledge that while these images attempt to display a documentary view, it is often tempered by physical obstacles and atmospheric conditions. The amassed images largely attempt to represent the experience of those who traverse the city daily, access restricted by fences and signs, but interesting sights in nearly all directions, from buildings in various states of damage, demolition and construction, to the art that has sprung up from footpaths to the top of high rises. Yet the documentation of many abandoned and damaged locations reflects the exploration of the post-quake city's abundant marginal spaces by graffiti and street artists.[90] In any city, peripheral and liminal use spaces are attractive to guerrilla artists, who, as Waclawek points out, "largely conceptualize their work as anti-capitalist and anti-establishment expressions of free speech, transform liminal socio-spatial sites into sites of action, communication and beauty."[91] In post-quake Christchurch, such spaces have occupied more visible and central positions, resulting in an interesting and unavoidable juxtaposition of empty and active.

Moving on

The primary resources of photographs and interviews, along with the diverse literature surrounding graffiti, street art and the local post-disaster experience, have all contributed to the construction and development of this work, exposing and suggesting a range of directions, approaches and issues to consider. The difficulties in definition, the complexities of legality, the relationship to art historical discourses and public art practices, all exemplified in various discussions, and often recurring throughout. However, as illustrated by the importance of the experience of photographing graffiti and street art across the city, it is the relationship to the specific post-disaster setting that is most influential and enduring. The following chapter provides some historical context surrounding pre-quake Christchurch's cultural and civic identity, the experience of the earthquakes, and the wider art world response. This discussion also importantly recognises graffiti and street art's existence in Christchurch as "other" forms of art. Having emerged locally in the late twentieth century, reflecting a global diaspora, by the time of the earthquakes, these forms were already entrenched, but they

[90] Although many works were discovered by chance, other examples were sought out in response to having been tipped off, from an artist personally announcing a new work, to information often gained through social media.
[91] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 115

were afforded a new physical landscape and as such an increased recognition and visibility, perhaps signifying a shifting attitude towards art in the streets, at least temporarily.

Figures:

Figure 2.1: Various examples graffiti, including a "piece", "throw-ups" and "tags", London (photo November 2011)

Figure 2.2: Various examples of elaborate graffiti pieces, See No Evil Festival, Bristol (photo September 2011)

Figure 2.3: Unidentified artist, stencil, Barcelona (photo November 2011)

Figure 2.4: Hero de Janiero, paste-up, Amsterdam (photo November 2011)

Figure 2.5: Gregos, street sculpture, Paris (photo November 2011)

Figure 2.6: Various stickers and paste-ups, including an Invader tile mosaic (top right), New York (photo November 2011)

Figure 2.7: Unknown artist, street craft, Bristol (photo October 2011)

2. Shakes, statues and spray paint: Providing context for Christchurch, the earthquakes and the arts

"Vast amounts of energy were released in the first few hours, changing the shape of Christchurch."[1]

- **From The Press publication *Earthquake: Christchurch, New Zealand, 22 February, 2011*, 2011**

"In Christchurch, a famously insular town with strong creative undercurrents, we are more aware than ever that cities are, like life, always transitional."[2]

- **George Parker and Barnaby Bennett, in *Christchurch: The Transitional City, Part IV,* 2012**

Introduction

For many Christchurch residents the earthquakes provide a demarcation, rendering the city definitively "before" and "after". While not intended as a straight-forward comparison of pre- and post-quake Christchurch, this chapter provides a brief discussion of the impact of the earthquakes upon the city's cultural identity and varied art communities. A consideration of Christchurch's past is important in constructing a broader local framework for the specific enquiries of this work. Any disaster will inevitably be entwined with unique local influences, and Christchurch affords an array of

[1] Christopher Moore, ed., with Press Journalists, images by Press and Fairfax photographers, picture research by Jude Tewnion, *Earthquake: Christchurch, New Zealand 22 February 2011*, Auckland, Random House, 2011, p. 93

[2] Barnaby Bennett, Eugenio Boidi and Irene Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City Pt IV*, Christchurch, Free Range Press, 2012, p. 5

specific historical, physical and cultural considerations when compared to other relatively recent post-disaster cities, such as New Orleans and San Francisco in the United States, Port au Prince in Haiti, or Sendai in Japan. Christchurch has historically lacked a strong sense of public space cultures, especially in comparison to cities like New Orleans, where music and parading cultures are deeply tied to the socio-spatial experience of the cityscape. Understandably, jazz funerals, second line parades and events such as Mardi Gras, were all important aspects of the recovery from the devastating Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[3] Yet Christchurch's post-quake creative landscape has been strongly entwined with the city's streets and public spaces, including the previously marginalised (and often vilified) presence of graffiti and street art, which while reaching new levels of prominence, was also imbued with various meanings over the drawn out recovery, forming an evolving and interesting aspect of the post-disaster environment.

This discussion begins with the immediate experience of the September 4, 2010 and February 22, 2011 earthquakes, their impact and the resulting and ongoing period of recovery. The quakes significantly impacted the city's arts communities and public art. This impact is also contextualised within the city's history as an English colony, an identity that was exemplified in much of the architecture and public art that has so often been presented as iconic, largely to the exclusion of indigenous and alternative histories that have also been examined. This leads to a brief discussion of public art across the city, from historical statuary, to more contemporary practices that have challenged and reconsidered the city's colonial history, and finally the emergence of graffiti and street art, the central concern of this dissertation. The arrival of graffiti and street art in Christchurch is framed within a wider national presence, which itself is indicative of their global dissemination. Graffiti and street art, whose very natures are born from their relationship to public space, have offered fitting creative and communicative responses to the post-quake landscape, a setting that has forced a reconsideration of both the city's art world and the presence of public art.

Shaken awake: The Christchurch earthquakes

Classroom instructions of how to act in the event of an earthquake are an enduring memory of my New Zealand childhood. Yet despite New Zealand's susceptibility to seismic activity (the country is

[3] In Spike Lee's post-Katrina New Orleans documentary *When the Levees Broke* (2006), a funeral parade, with a horse-drawn carriage (carrying a placard reading "Katrina") and black-dressed musicians and dancers, slowly moves through the desolate Ninth Ward. As a funeral dirge is played by musicians, participants dance in the unmistakable manner of New Orleans' parading culture. The scene draws together the city's past, present and future by re-establishing the strong connection between local culture and public space to both mourn and regenerate.

colloquially referred to as the "Shaky Isles"), since the Napier earthquake of 1931, there had not been a devastating earthquake in a populated urban area. Importantly, Napier, prior to the Second World War, provided a markedly different urban setting from post-Millennium Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch. For those in Christchurch forcefully stirred from their sleep early on the morning of September 4th 2010, the violent shaking was a surreal, unexpected and confusing experience. An earthquake is always abrupt; there is no ability to map a quake in the manner of an advancing tsunami, storm or spreading wildfire. There is no warning. The unexpected nature of a quake therefore tests the ability of a city or community to respond. As Christchurch journalist Martin van Beynen reasoned in the wake of the September event: "…an earthquake finds a city out. A severe shake tests infrastructure, examines emergency responses, exposes planning decisions and, most of all, it asks some searching questions of its people."[4] As people took stock of the quake's impact that September morning, the tests the people of Christchurch would face over the coming years could not yet be fully comprehended.

The September 4th quake, striking at 4:35am and measuring magnitude 7.1, lasted less than one minute, but it would form the opening chapter of a much larger narrative. The earthquake's epicentre was located 40km west of the city, near the small town of Darfield, at a depth of 10km. The large quake was triggered by smaller quakes from multiple faults occurring simultaneously. It was, as journalist Paul Gorman declared, a "complicated event."[5] Importantly, primarily due to the early morning timing, no-one perished as a direct result of the quake, as the editors of *Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch* acknowledged: "…it felt like a bullet had been dodged."[6] A state of emergency was declared and remained in place until September 16th, with a cordon temporarily placed around much of the central city. Over the following days, weeks and months, aftershocks and a stream of news reports began to create a greater sense of the realities of life in an active quake zone.[7] Visible signs of physical damage were evident across the city, from cracked suburban homes, to the crumbled brick work of inner city buildings. The psychological impact was apparent in aversions towards large buildings, the varied responses to aftershocks (some people froze, others fled), and the inevitable references in daily conversation, which often included a newly adopted "quake vocabulary".[8] Yet within a week of the September earthquake many infrastructural services

[4] The Press, *The Big Quake : Canterbury, September 4, 2010,* Auckland, Random House, 2010, p. 28
[5] Paul Gorman, "Primed for a show of force", *The Press (Earthquake 22/2 One Year On* supplement), Monday February 20, 2012, pp. 6-7
[6] Barnaby Bennett, James Dann, Emma Johnson and Ryan Reynolds, eds., *Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch*, Christchurch, Free Range Press, 2014, p. 18
[7] The first significant aftershock, measuring 5.3, struck at 4:56am, that same morning and signalled just one aspect of the quakes' impact on daily existence over the following months.
[8] This vocabulary was both scientific ("liquefaction", "ground acceleration") and colloquial ("munted").

had returned, allowing some level of normality to resume.[9] Echoing the attitude of many, van Beynen expressed the expectation that following the relatively efficient response to the September quake, the city was:

> ...much better prepared and equipped for its next big earthquake. Opposition to tighter building regulations and earthquake strengthening will now be an isolated whisper in the region… Clearly, some of the city's risky buildings have been exposed and expunged without loss of life and the city has received a brusque reminder about where it is safe to build.[10]

While van Beynen acknowledged the inevitability of another significant quake, his comments also revealed a sentiment shared by many: the city had survived the worst largely unscathed. However, the belief that the city would now be better prepared in the event of another significant disaster was to be tested much sooner than any would have hoped.

Just over five months later, on February 22, 2011, the sense of relative fortune surrounding the September quake was eroded in another seismic burst that led *The Christchurch Press* to declare that Tuesday: "Our Worst Day".[11] This time, the city was not shrouded in the darkness of early morning, but exposed by midday light. At 12.51pm, the 6.3 magnitude quake shook the city, emanating from a location just west of the portside village of Lyttelton, from a shallow depth under the nearby Port Hills. The February quake, with the strongest recorded ground acceleration in New Zealand's history, resulted in even more severe damage to the already affected natural surroundings and built environment, from the subterranean infrastructure to the high rise buildings that were left notably askew. Seventy per cent of the city lost power and eighty per cent were left without water.[12] In the immediate hours after the quake, people navigated the damaged landscape, some trying to get home, unsure of what would await them, others searching for loved ones who could not be contacted. This time lives were lost. Deaths occurred at points across the city, from the Port Hills to the suburbs, with a final toll of one hundred and eighty-five people. One hundred and sixty-nine of those perished within the central city. Confidence in the built environment, already shaken, was eroded even further.[13] As a city largely recognisable for the colonial footprint evident in its neo-gothic architecture, numerous squares, and statues of notable forbears, Christchurch was rendered almost unrecognisable in places. The February experience caused many residents to leave Christchurch, either for temporary respite

[9] The Press, *The Big Quake*, p. 28
[10] Ibid., p. 44
[11] Uncredited, "Our Worst Day", *The Press*, Wednesday, February 23, 2011, p. A1
[12] Uncredited, "Fact File 22/2", *The Press*, Wednesday, February 22, 2012, p. A6
[13] In June 2012 *The Press* reported that forty-eight percent of people surveyed still felt unsafe in at least one large building still open in the city. (Uncredited, "How do you feel in buildings?", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, June 2, 2012, p. A3)

or for good. By the end of June 2011, approximately nine thousand people had left the city permanently.[14] The physical environment required not only practical repair, but ultimately a deeper form of transformation, and in the eyes of some, it presented a landscape of need and of opportunity that could not be ignored, from specific earthquake responses to more broadly conceived creative interventions.

Fallen statues and broken walls: The impact of the earthquakes on the city's art world

The physical damage across the city notably affected Christchurch's art world, from the loss of studio and exhibition spaces, to the art, both public and private, either damaged or trapped within the city's fenced-off "red zone". In the wake of the February quake, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu was commandeered as the headquarters for Civil Defence, before being closed for remediation work.[15] Gallery director Jenny Harper wrote in November 2011: "We just can't tell you when the Gallery will reopen. We will reopen – that is not in any doubt – but it's too early to tell when that might be with any degree of accuracy…"[16] After a period of uncertainty, the Gallery finally re-opened in December 2015.[17]

Many of the central city dealer galleries and art project spaces were also closed in the wake of the quakes, many indefinitely and some permanently. Amongst those affected were the Brooke-Gifford Gallery, the Physics Room, the Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA) and The High Street Project. The Arts Centre, which housed a number of studios and exhibition spaces, was closed for necessary repair. Studio spaces were also lost, in many cases resulting in the loss of artists' work and related material.[18] This impact on both the arts infrastructure and the artists themselves was always going to be a concern, and as with many Christchurch residents, artists faced decisions about whether to stay or go. Art writer Lara Strongman noted that a familiar problem had become even more pronounced:

---

[14] Uncredited, *Earthquake, 22/2 One Year On* supplement, *The Press,* Thursday, February 23, 2012, p. 4

[15] The Gallery became a backdrop for Mayor Bob Parker's regular public addresses. The art on its walls were no longer visible, replaced with the familiar hi-vis vest worn by the Mayor.

[16] Jenny Harper, "Director's Foreword", *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.166, Summer, December 2011-February 2012, p. 5

[17] Keith Lynch, "Gallery won't open till 2013", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 28, 2012, p. A5; Charlie Gates, "Christchurch Art Gallery reopening after nearly 5 years of closure", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 19, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/75259288/christchurch-art-gallery-reopening-after-nearly-5-years-of-closure, accessed January 14, 2016

[18] Virginia Were, "When the dust settles", *Art News New Zealand*, Volume 21, Number 2, Winter 2011, p. 78; Charlie Gates, "Artists bid farewell to Government Life building", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, May 19, 2012, p. A11

> One of the challenges for the future of the arts in Christchurch – as it has always been – is retaining artists in the city after they finish art school. A real problem now is that cheap studio space is now almost impossible to find; the buildings at the end of their commercial lives which artists used to occupy have been pulled down.[19]

If the defection of artists was a long-held problem, often tied to the city's conservative reputation and perceived lack of opportunities, the physical impact of the quakes also triggered a potential re-think of the city's cultural and artistic identity.

The wider impact on the city's arts and event venues and general infrastructure also ensured a number of planned arts events were disrupted, displaced, delayed, or completely scuppered. The 2011 plans of the Christchurch Buskers Festival (itself nominally a celebration of a street culture that shares a connection with graffiti and street art through public performance) and the Christchurch Arts Festival were both affected. The SCAPE 6 Biennial of Public Art, originally scheduled to occur from late September through to early November of 2010, was delayed with plans to be re-staged in 2011.[20] However after the February earthquake, the event's form had to be re-envisaged. The result was effectively the cancellation of its original plan, replaced with a more disparate programme. Several projects were shifted to Auckland, while a small number were staged in Christchurch in new locations across an extended timeframe. Héctor Zamora's skeletal *Muegano*, which specifically referenced the density of urban living, was eventually constructed within the Botanic Gardens, and Joanna Langford's *The High Country*, a whimsical landscape made from repurposed materials was stationed high above passing traffic on the corner of Montreal Street, both temporarily realised in 2013. Curator Blair French noted how SCAPE 6 had intended to focus upon a "critical engagement with the models of urban regeneration and development then planned for Christchurch's inner city", and as such had developed "finely honed relationships to specific locations within the inner city."[21] However, as the event was reconfigured, this relationship became a difficult one to maintain as projects were re-contextualised within the unique post-quake setting. Indeed, "urban regeneration" took on a much different meaning in the post-quake city.

Many examples of the city's public art were imbued with altered readings due to their new surroundings and the juxtaposition with visible quake damage. In many cases, the durable nature of

[19] Lara Strongman, "Postcard from Christchurch", *Art News New Zealand*, Volume 32, Number 2, Winter, 2012, p. 40

[20] Anton Parson's *Passing Time*, the legacy work for the 2010 Biennial was installed just days before the February 22nd earthquake, after delays caused by the September 2010 earthquake, ensuring an enduring connection between the work and the earthquake experience.

[21] Blair French, "Treading Lightly", in Blair French, ed., *SCAPE 7 Volume One: Guide & Reader*, Christchurch, SCAPE Public Art, 2013, pp. 12-17

large-scale industrial sculptures was contrasted with broken brick and stone buildings. The upright and shiny appearance of Neil Dawson's *Chalice* **(Fig. 3.1)** provided a stark contrast to the broken Christ Church Cathedral now missing its iconic spire. *Chalice*, installed in Cathedral Square in 2001, had originally been a controversial addition to the Square, considered an ill-fit for the surrounding aesthetic, many were fearful it would "besmirch the city centre."[22] Over time the steel structure had become an established marker of the Square. But in the wake of the quakes, the ability of the conical work to survive unscathed and stand upright provided a stark contrast to the fallen Cathedral spire.[23] As such it became a symbol of both pre- and post-quake Christchurch, a feature of the city's past, but also a stoic survivor. Dawson himself commented on the re-contextualisation of his work: "I've always had the idea that artworks can reinvent themselves, and I remember that *Chalice* went up around the time of September 11 [2001, coinciding with the terrorist attacks on New York City]. Now I hope it might be a bit of an icon for the recovery, rather than being associated with destruction."[24] Similarly, the SCAPE legacy works *Nucleus* (2006) by Phil Price, and *Flour Power* (2008) by Regan Gentry, were both captured within the central city red zone **(Figs. 3.2, 3.3)**.[25] Despite being largely unaffected by the quakes, they inhabited much changed environments that offered new interpretations. Gentry's bunched power poles seemed less strange in an environment marked by a warped appearance. Justin Paton described the kinetic *Nucleus*, still slowly moving while stranded within the red zone as a unique, lively presence amidst the otherwise still central city, like "some sci-fi creature signalling to be rescued from this blasted bit of Earth."[26]

The effects of the quakes also revealed the complex nature of Christchurch's cultural identity and the way art in the city's public spaces has at times reflected Christchurch's changing make-up. If the examples of contemporary public art had in many cases survived intact and remained in place, the city's historical statues and sculpture had provided a different narrative. The fall of many of the long-standing statues around the central city was symbolic of the wider changes facing Christchurch. The bronze likenesses of Robert Godley and William Rolleston were both knocked from their pedestals; a microcosm of the destruction of larger buildings and their connection to the colonial heritage of the city. Historian Bruce Ansley connected the significance of the fall of these colonial forebears, declaring

[22] Michelle Duff, "New Zealand's weird and wonderful public art", June 21, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/arts/69484592/New-Zealands-weird-and-wonderful-public-art, accessed, January 21, 2016

[23] Indeed, an image of Chalice with the broken Cathedral in the background was the cover image for the first post-quake issue of *Art News New Zealand* (Volume 31, Number 2, Winter, 2011).

[24] Virginia Were, "When the Dust Settles", *Art News New Zealand*, p. 78

[25] Uncredited, "Discomfort Zone", *Bunker Notes: The Christchurch Art Gallery Blog*, March 23, 2012, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2012/03/23/sssfgvswfgvsw/, accessed Mar 30, 2012

[26] Justin Paton, "Perimeter Notes: A Day Around the Red Zone", *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.167, Autumn, March-May, 2012, pp. 17-18

that the "model English city they envisaged had gone forever."[27] The image of the fallen Godley drew historian Katie Pickles to suggest that February 22 was the city's "postcolonial moment".[28] However, while the lingering colonial identity had been strongly evident across the city, it had also provided artists the opportunity to contest notions of place and history across the public landscape.

A city of brick and bronze: Christchurch's civic identities and the presence of art

The scale of change across Christchurch, particularly the damaged built environment, caused many to reflect on the city's colonial heritage and sense of identity. While Ōtautahi, Christchurch, the largest city in New Zealand's South Island, may not have the population, international status or cosmopolitan make-up of the larger Auckland "super-city", the nominal importance of the political capital Wellington, or the cultural reputation of either, it still has a considerable presence in New Zealand's social and cultural history.[29] The colony of Canterbury, the larger province in which Christchurch is the centre, was developed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield as a duplicate English model in 1848, with an Anglican cathedral and college at the centre and street names that served as "old-world reference points."[30] Christchurch, as the heart of the Canterbury settlement, was the most successful example of Wakefield's strongly urban concept of colonisation. As local historian Geoffrey Rice has acknowledged, Wakefield

> …deplored the disorder and uncivilised behaviour of frontier colonies, and insisted that his settlements were to have a well-established town, with all the amenities of civilised society, as the hub of a farming community...[31]

This vision of social order was echoed in the built environment, with the ordered grid of central city streets and neo-gothic architecture vital aspects of the transplanted English identity. The development of the settlement also represented a wrangling of the terrain from its natural state, the imposition of colonial will. Ansley has noted that the plainness of the marshy landscape of rivers and creeks that confronted early settlers required such architecture: "Lacking the hills and harbours of Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland, Christchurch's first citizens relied on the beauty of a built environment to

---

[27] Bruce Ansley, *Christchurch Heritage: A Celebration of Lost Buildings & Streetscapes*, Auckland, Random House, 2011, p. 9

[28] Katie Pickles, "A natural break from our colonial past", *The Press*, Friday, April 8, 2011, p. A15

[29] After thirty years of growth, by 2010, Christchurch city's residential population had surpassed 375,000. (Christchurch City Council, "Christchurch City Population Summary, 1981-2010", http://www.ccc.govt.nz/cityleisure/statsfacts/statistics/population.aspx, accessed July 10, 2012)

[30] Pickles, "A natural break from our colonial past", *The Press*, p. A15

[31] Geoffrey W. Rice, *Christchurch Changing: An Illustrated History (Second Edition)*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2008, pp. 11-12

give their new town form and dignity."[32] This architectural identity was cherished and defended by successive generations. However, for many, especially outside of Christchurch, despite the neo-gothic beauty, the city's architecture also represented the city's conservative reputation. This reputation also suggested the marginalisation of alternative cultural identities and narratives within the city's public spaces, something that has been investigated by numerous artists in both the pre- and post-quake landscapes.

Christchurch would come to reflect an English identity rather than any cultural melting pot. Wakefield's vision of civilised "English" order also seeped into the artistic and cultural endeavours of the young colony, serving as symbols of the quality and morality of Christchurch's citizens. Art historian Jonathan Mane-Wheoki noted that from the beginning the visual arts, music and English literature formed the backbone of the city's intellectual and educational establishment, most notably in the form of the amateur societies which "…came to dominate the arts scene between two world wars, and helped to create the image of Christchurch as culturally traditional, conservative, genteel, snobbish, stuffy and, above all, English."[33] From the use of painting to document and ideologically re-construct the colony's landscape and its new communities, to fiery debates around the purchase of work, and heated discussion about the place of art in the public spaces of the city, Christchurch's relationship with the visual arts has often illustrated the social climate of the city.[34] While architecture might have served as the dominant symbol of the city's public profile, public art has alternatively reinforced and contested Christchurch's colonial identity. As might be expected of a city with such strong colonial roots, memorial sculptures and statues honouring civic history have surveyed the landscape, from important civic founders to reminders of the influence of the British Empire, exemplified in the Bridge of Remembrance (1924), William Trewethey's *Citizens' War Memorial* (1937), and the numerous statues of figures such as William Rolleston (1906), Godley (1867) and Queen Victoria (1903) **(Figs. 3.4-3.6)**. This tradition has continued into the new Millennium, with a statue of Canterbury's only First World War Victorian Cross winner Henry Nicholas, erected in 2007, and Mark Whyte's 2009 *Twelve Local Heroes*, a series of bronze busts commemorating 'heroes' from a range of fields, from cricketer Sir Richard Hadlee, to artist Bill Sutton and electronics businessman

[32] Ansley, *Christchurch Heritage*, p. 8

[33] Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, "The High Arts in a Regional Culture – From Englishness to Self-Reliance", in John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall, eds., *Southern Capital: Christchurch: Towards a City Biography, 1850-2000,* Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, p. 299

[34] Warren Feeney has described Scotsman John Gibb's *Shades of Evening - The Estuary* (1880), which was purchased by the CSA in 1881 as the nucleus of a public collection as an example of the city's construction of an artistic identity, but also symbolically of a colonial claim to the land and the implantation of the colonial culture on the area. (Feeney, *The Radical, the Reactionary and the Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1996,* Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2011, p. 25)

Sir Angus Tait, on Worcester Boulevard outside the Arts Centre.[35] Indeed, the three bronze corgi dogs by David Marshall **(Fig. 3.7)**, installed on High Street in 2003 to mark the Queen's golden jubilee, might be seen as both an affirmation of the city's colonial roots, and a playful twist on traditional statuary.[36]

In comparison to statuary and sculpture, and importantly in the context of this thesis, muralism has not been a celebrated aspect of Christchurch's (or wider New Zealand's) art history, largely placed at the peripheries of the national canon.[37] As a comparatively young colony, painting has largely remained indoors, the qualities of muralism as a form of social communication and education have been less urgent in a country which has never felt the sweeping fervour of revolution nor the ideological dominance of the Church. In New Zealand, public murals have largely been the domain of figures from the margins of the art world or produced as anomalies of more widely recognised artists' larger bodies of work. In Christchurch, the importance placed on the city's architecture rendered public murals an ill-fit. This was exacerbated by muralism's less permanent nature in a city concerned with preserving a sense of history for future generations. A 1997 survey of public art in Christchurch's central city by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery highlighted few murals, especially in exterior sites.[38] Although murals had been produced in interior settings to embellish architecture early in the city's history, such as Ezra Briggs' *Mid Summer Night's Dream* (1908) mural in the Theatre Royal, mounted into a ceiling dome above the audience (which was included in the 1997 survey), the creation of murals in public spaces around the city was a much later development, only becoming more common by the 1970s. Such murals, often decorative or community-centric and operating outside the concerns of modernist and contemporary trends, have mostly been excluded from the city's public art discourses, lacking a central role in constructing narratives of public space or civic histories or a sense of cultural sophistication in the manner of the city's sculpture and statues.

Yet, if the city has perhaps been popularly identified by these traditional colonial icons, often to the exclusion of other narratives, the presence of public art has at times suggested and investigated alternative and indigenous histories and approaches to public space, challenging the city's cultural construction and extending the presence of art across the city. When Cathedral Square re-opened to the public in July 2013, the broken Christ Church Cathedral and the empty plinth that previously held

[35] The busts were shifted after the February earthquake as the Arts Centre underwent remediation.
[36] Nicole Mathewson, "Bronze corgis return to Christchurch", June 9, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/10133553/Bronze-corgis-return-to-Christchurch, accessed February 11, 2016
[37] In a reflection of its place in national art historical discourses, mural painting is not discussed in any depth in either Gil Docking's *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Enlarged Edition with additions by Michael Dunn covering 1970 to 1990, Auckland, David Bateman Ltd, 1990) or Michael Dunn's *New Zealand Painting, A Concise* History (Revised and Expanded, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2003).
[38] The survey, *Public Art in Central Christchurch – A Study by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1997*, compiled by Simone Stephens, was created to document publicly owned art in the central Christchurch area.

the statue of Godley were joined by colourful transformations that aimed to encourage people to return and re-establish an emotional connection to the iconic location.[39] Artists Sara Hughes and Chris Heaphy, commissioned jointly by the Christchurch City Council, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, transformed various aspects of the Square and partially obscured the dominant, damaged Cathedral, but also suggested alternative narratives of place; Hughes' plastic put-in cups turned the ubiquitous hurricane fencing into solid blocks of colour that suggested tukutuku panels while Heaphy's whare provided a reference to the historical significance of the site for local iwi **(Figs. 3.8, 3.9)**.[40] The whare in particular provided a direct reference to the site's pre-colonial use for food storage by tangata whenua. But while these were post-quake additions, there have been numerous examples of non-traditional and contemporary approaches to public art that have challenged and extended the role of art in Christchurch's sense of identity. In the wake of the earthquakes, a number of artists have reconsidered Christchurch's colonial and indigenous identities, indicative of the recognition of the change brought upon the region, from redesigning civic logos (Matt Galloway's *Art Over Nature*, 2012), to investigating Māori stories and histories embedded in the city's now urbanised landscape (Regan Stokes' *Whakapapa* project for the 2014 Festival of Transitional Architecture). However, such approaches extend back beyond the post-quake city, and include a range of alternatives, not just to Christchurch's civic and cultural identity, but also to the often conservative presence of public art.

If traditional representational statuary and memorial sculpture has been an enduring presence, contemporary public sculpture only became a more pronounced presence in the city towards the end of the twentieth century. Neil Dawson's *Echo,* an early example, was installed in the Arts Centre originally as a temporary addition in 1981. The work was damaged and removed in the following years, before being reinstalled as a permanent feature in 1991, remaining in place until the February earthquake. However, while other examples have dotted the landscape, it was perhaps the emergence of SCAPE that raised the profile of contemporary public art in Christchurch. The SCAPE Public Art Biennial has been a notable contributor to the city's public arts since the late twentieth century, seeking to inject both permanent and temporary contemporary public art into the central and, to a lesser degree, suburban city. SCAPE was developed by the Art & Industry Trust in 1998 to deliver "high quality" temporary and permanent projects, in response to the perceived lack of such public art across Christchurch. SCAPE's bi-annual programmes, latterly curated around cohesive themes such as the rules and regulations of public space (*Don't Misbehave*, 2006) or the politics of

[39] Christopher Moore, "Vibrant art for Square", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, July 6, 2013, p. A9; Andrew Paul Wood, "Heaphy and Hughes in Christchurch", June 17, 2013, http://eyecontactsite.com/2013/07/hughes-and-heaphy-in-christchurch, accessed July 23, 2014

[40] Hughes' patterns were also a colourful reference to the tiling of the Cathedral roof.

public space (*Wandering Lines: Towards a new culture of space*, 2008), have included work by local, national and international contributors, from large scale sculpture to smaller conceptual and performance-based interventions. By 2011, SCAPE had gifted seven permanent public art works to the city, as well as staging 150 temporary projects. While the permanent works have often reflected a large-scale sculptural approach (and indeed the relationship fostered between the arts and various industries), the diverse temporary projects have enabled a range of interactions with contemporary artistic practices within public space, eliciting sensations of wonder or inviting active participation. These projects have engaged with a variety of sites, such as motion-triggered lights installed in the Avon River by Hannah and Aaron Beehre, (*Avon Lights,* 2008), which Morgan Thomas described as enveloping "the viewer in a sense of the physical interconnectedness of things", and as such might also have suggested the importance of the Avon River for both local iwi and ecosystems.[41] Other projects re-considered the existing cultural framework of the city, as in Tatzu Oozu's construction of a domestic structure around the statue of Captain James Cook in Victoria Square (*Endeavour*, 2008), which left the bronze Captain standing in the shower. In 2002 Michael Parekowhai's giant inflatable rabbits Cosmo and Jim McMurtry, a controversial project proposed for the SCAPE biennial that year, illustrated the public backlash public art can incite. The "Disney-fied" rabbits, intended for Cathedral Square, one lying dead, the other peering from behind the Cathedral at his fallen friend, were a comment on the impact of colonialism on local Māori. But the rabbits were never realised, a result of the public response, which deemed the playful, cartoonish nature of the works an unsuitable fit for Cathedral Square, as if their placement would impact the perception of the Cathedral itself. However, while SCAPE has provided a range of alternatives to the city's traditional and colonial artistic legacies, as with similar events around the world, such as the post-Katrina *Prospect* in New Orleans, the biennial's status a large-scale event has not avoided criticism. The reliance upon international and out-of-town artists and their ability to meaningfully engage in the specifics of Christchurch's urban landscape, the need for sponsorship and private funding and resulting potential for concessions around the organisation of the event, as well as a perceived "top-down" quality, are obvious issues that have confronted SCAPE. But since its conception, SCAPE has resulted in an increased presence and variety of public art by prominent local, national and international artists.

If SCAPE has provided a visible public art profile, the pre-quake city was also host to a range of projects that highlighted subtle engagements with Christchurch's streets in smaller scales and less overt manners. While SCAPE has created an array of additions, legacy projects have tended towards large

[41] Morgan Thomas, "Hannah & Aaron Beehre", in Fulya Erdemci and Danae Mossman, eds., *Wandering Lines, Towards a New Culture of Space, SCAPE 2008 Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space, 19 September – 2 November 2008*, Christchurch, Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2009, p. 38

scale sculptural works symbolic of a particular civic approach to public art. However a number of lower profile projects have provided a contrast to the perceived dominance of large scale modernist sculpture within the city's public art landscape, an approach art writer Thomasin Sleigh explained as "[h]ard to significantly damage and easy to maintain, these works are the classic council funded attempt to add a bit of 'cultural' flare to an urban landscape."[42] Such contemporary approaches were notably initiated by local galleries and art spaces. Between 2002 and 2004, contemporary art space The Physics Room presented the *Gridlocked* project. Co-ordinated by Tessa Giblin, the project created an environment for discovery by utilising alleyways, shop fronts, windows and sandwich boards around central Christchurch "with the intention of creating art works which the public could happen upon, and have an experience of the work unmediated by an institution of art."[43] Similarly, The High Street Project's *Offsite* programme, which began in 2007, sought to be "a continuous source of support, both financial and curatorial, to artists living, working and responding to the particular set of issues presented by the physical and physiological landscape of Christchurch and more widely, New Zealand."[44] *Offsite* saw sculptural and installation works spread around the city, from the window of a suburban television repair shop, to the box lobby of the High Street Post Office, and included a 2008 work by Stacey Turner where the artist dragged a huge brushstroke across an inner city billboard that Thomasin Sleigh drew into a discussion around attempts to eradicate graffiti and street art and a debate on "ownership, aesthetics and art in the street."[45] These projects attempted to engage audiences in ways beyond beautification, memorialisation, or the iconic "landmark" and identity-construction status of larger work, encouraging audiences to consider fleeting moments of interaction with contemporary art in unexpected and non-traditional spaces. Such an approach raises immediate comparisons with street art practices, and while *Gridlocked* and *Offsite* were embedded in an intellectual art world approach that sets it apart from graffiti and street art's outsider nature, it is possible to understand this similarity as part of the continuing overlap between street art and contemporary art worlds. While these examples signified alternative approaches to art in Christchurch's public spaces, and as such challenges to the legitimacy of tradition, the emergence of graffiti and street art provides an inherently anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment, and perhaps predominantly (although not exclusively) un-commissioned, presence in the city's streets.

---

[42] Uncredited, "Stacey Turner. From 3 March 2008", March 2008, http://hspgallery.blogspot.co.nz/2008/03/stacey-turner-from-3-march-2008.html, accessed September 18, 2012; Thomasin Sleigh, "Tell Me to My Face", December 1, 2008, http://hspgallery.blogspot.co.nz/2007/12/tell-me-to-my-face-from-1-december-2008.html, accessed September 18, 2012

[43] Tessa Giblin, "Gridlocked Project, organised by the Physics Room", http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/archived/gridlocked/, accessed September 18, 2012

[44] Thomasin Sleigh, "Tell Me to My Face", accessed September 18, 2012

[45] Thomasin Sleigh, "How can they ban graffiti?", *The Press*, Wednesday, March 5, 2008, p. D4

A new arrival: Graffiti and street art's emergence in Christchurch and New Zealand

If art in the city's public spaces has at times challenged established civic identities, the arrival of graffiti and street art has added another layer to the creative public landscape that in its transgressive nature, has provided an alternative to both the art world and the city's conservative identity. While this presence, strongly indebted to international roots, has not always explicitly deconstructed these dominant narratives, appearing less concerned with notions of civic identity, in their youthful, transgressive, peripheral and insular natures, they have been unavoidably engaged with identity issues, even if such a relationship is ultimately inherent rather than outwardly overt. The emergence of graffiti in Christchurch can be considered within a wider national presence. New Zealand youths embraced graffiti writing specifically as part of the wider hip hop culture that arrived in stages starting in the 1980s. Ethnologist Kirsten Zemke-White, in her introduction to Elliot "Askew One" O'Donnell's *InForm* (2007), explained how breakdancing emerged first in Aotearoa in the early eighties, in many cases through the diaspora of Samoan relatives in the US, followed by graffiti art, and then rap music towards the end of the decade.[46] Graffiti writing had spread around the world through an array of connectors, and New Zealand was no different; from travelling artists (often visiting relatives eager to share their new pastime), to copies of *Subway Art*, recordings of *Style Wars* and the movie *Beat Street* (1984), and later shared copies of *12 Oz. Prophet* and *The Source* magazines. Auckland graffiti artist Exist remembers watching *Style Wars* when it aired in New Zealand and the almost immediate effect it had on a generation: "This doco-movie was broadcast to this little island nation and overnight kids became writers or at least felt (they) were, even if it was just sketching in our school books."[47] While graffiti arrived in the mid-eighties, with Auckland even featured in Chalfant and Prigoff's *Spraycan Art* (1987), it was perhaps not until the mid-to-late nineties that a local hip hop renaissance saw graffiti become a more visible part of the country's cultural and visual arts landscape, rather than its secretive, separatist roots. Into the new Millennium enterprises such as Askew One and Pest5's *Disruptiv* (which included a magazine and a gallery space), an increased network of specialist exhibition spaces (although largely centralised in Auckland), hip hop summits and festivals (such as the graffiti component of the Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit, *Disrupt the System*), visiting international professional artists and an array of other opportunities resulted in an increased visibility and maturity. While a

[46] Kirsten Zemke-White, "Foreword", in Elliot O'Donnell, *InForm: New Zealand Graffiti Artists Discuss Their Work*, Auckland, Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd, 2007, p. 9
[47] O'Donnell, *InForm*, p. 87

global influence has remained strongly evident, localised styles have developed as definitive of New Zealand graffiti, such as the emergence of "straights" (also known as "printed tags" or "Gangster Style") from South Auckland in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to become the most prevalent graffiti writing style in the country.[48]

By the end of the 1990s and into the new Millennium, street art had started to appear in New Zealand cities alongside graffiti's already established presence, echoing a growing global popularity. Aided by the digital flow of information rather than the more analogue nature of graffiti's initial emergence, street art was nevertheless enabled by graffiti writing's example of creative public rebellion. As was the case around the globe, street art interventions were often associated with graffiti writing culture, but demarcations were constantly evident, technically, stylistically and notably in the perceptions of "hardcore" traditionalist graffiti writers and new "art school" kids of street art.[49] Auckland artist Trust Me playfully (and with a tongue-in-cheek offensiveness) described these contrasting perceptions in 2007:

> Graffiti Artists: Air Force 1 wearing, liquor drinking, crack smoking, thieving, lying, illiterate drop outs who are constantly trying to climb the graff ladder of fame while calling anything artistic that's not Graffiti "gay". Street Artists: No balls, bleeding heart, romantic, hippy art school fags too pussy to do "real" graffiti while talking about the 'concept' behind their work. … In my experience the bullshit macho hierarchical element isn't so prevalent amongst people doing things outside of traditional hip-hop born graffiti. At a certain level, there is a very closed minded juvenile attitude amongst "graff heads." I suppose because of the young age of the average graffiti writer/tagger. You find however, those who have been around a while are far more open to creative endeavour regardless of form.[50]

While this distinction remains to some extent, as Trust Me suggests, a number of graffiti artists and especially those who now make a living from their work increasingly embrace non-traditional and expansive approaches, with many shifting styles relatively seamlessly, while maintaining a strong connection with their graffiti backgrounds. Indeed, New Zealand graffiti writing culture maintains a duality of adherence to tradition and the embrace of alternative and flexible approaches. Although graffiti has perhaps remained the more commonly visible of the two, street art has gained a strong presence in New Zealand, and is increasingly influential in cities, galleries and in commercial forms,

[48] "Straights", closely resembling Los Angeles gang graffiti, are a lettering style of relatively simple, evenly sized characters, italicised to the right in a horizontal roll call of crew members. (Pest5, "Straights", *Disrupt Magazine*, Issue 5, 2005, pp. 101-105)

[49] Although it should be noted that graffiti writers have also utilised "street art" techniques, such as stickers and even stencils, to "get up".

[50] Uncredited, "Trust Me", *Sideroom Magazine*, Volume 1, Winter, 2007, p. 20

and an array of artists gaining significant profiles, such as Misery, Deus, Auckland's Cut Collective and more.[51]

Christchurch has little formally recorded and documented history of its pre-quake graffiti or street art cultures; stored instead in personal photo collections or recounted verbally between artists. But over the last decade, alongside the rise of digital documentation on the internet and social media, there has been an increased amount of exposure of the national graffiti and street art scenes. Books, films, websites and magazines have profiled local artists, uncovered influences, and documented stylistic developments, constructing a sense of national graffiti and street art identities, while also illustrating the increasing popularity and visibility of artists and their work.[52] New Zealand artists have also gained international recognition via various publications, websites and events.[53] Yet in the context of this discussion, it is notable that local productions have largely focussed on Auckland and Wellington, with Christchurch often overlooked or featured less prominently, a symptom of the city's more marginal pre-quake graffiti and street art reputation. While Dcypher, Lurq, Fiasko and Ikarus featured relatively regularly in issues of *Disrupt Magazine* in the early 2000s, only a handful of Christchurch figures have been included in more recent, high-profile New Zealand graffiti and street art publications and productions.[54] Lurq, Dcypher and Pest5 were profiled in *InForm* (the latter already based in Auckland by the time the book was released), while no Christchurch artists were included in the more recent (and notably post-quake) documentaries *Dregs* (2012) or *If These Walls Could Talk* (2014).[55] This omission might be attributed to a range of factors, from the size and history of specific local scenes, the leading personalities and the media markets of respective cities. However, the post-quake city has presented an opportunity for graffiti and street art in their myriad forms to become more prominent

[51] In some cases, it is difficult to define these figures as street artists, as they retain roots and connections to graffiti writing, while also producing work decidedly outside of graffiti's traditional parameters. Yet another example of the state of flux of the two realms.

[52] O'Donnell, *InForm*; Munro, *graf/AK,* Auckland, Beatnik Publishing, 2012; Cinzah Merkins and Karl Sheridan, *Dregs,* Dregs Ltd, 2012; Ross Liew, *If These Walls Could Talk*, 2013/2014; *Disrupt* and *Sideroom* magazines

[53] The likes of the TMD crew have a significant and highly respected global profile, with members (which includes an international profile) participating in a number of high-profile events and exhibitions (including an art world presence outside of graffiti and street art circles). Auckland's Askew One has been featured in popular art magazine *Juxtapoz* ("Painted profiles from Askew One", March 6, 2014, http://www.juxtapoz.com/illustration/painted-profiles-from-askew-one, accessed April 7, 2015), and along with BMD was profiled in Schacter's *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti* (p. 384 (Askew One), p. 386 (BMD)), Owen Dippie is also regularly featured on the website *Brooklyn Street Art* ("Owen Dippie "Radiant Madonna" unites Raphael and Haring in Brooklyn", July 11, 2015, http://www.brooklynstreetart.com/theblog/2015/07/11/owen-dippie-radiant-madonna-unites-raphael-and-haring-in-brooklyn/, accessed February 25, 2016), while various New Zealand artists increasingly feature at international festivals, such Misery's work at *Pow! Wow! Hawaii* 2014.

[54] Christchurch raised Pest5 was a co-creator of *Disrupt Magazine*, but had relocated to Auckland, and Fiasko had also left Christchurch by the middle of the first decade of the new millennium.

[55] Undeniably the construction of a national history is always fraught with difficulties and can reflect personal preferences of any author.

in the city's visual and cultural landscape, and due to some notable projects, the national consciousness.

Graffiti writing developed in Christchurch later than Auckland and Wellington. Auckland, in particular has a much greater sense of history. Originally from Christchurch, Pest5 noted the difference between his southern roots and his new home in Auckland: "Things were quite different up here. In Christchurch my generation were the ones who set it. In Auckland my generation is three generations deep – you've got an old school and a super-duper old school. There's so much tradition and history."[56] There had long been "graffiti" in Christchurch in the form of parietal writing. Prominent Christchurch writer Lurq has recounted the early Christchurch graffiti scene as "…really just political slogans and gang emblems and a giant Ghostbusters symbol, which was cool. It was all new to me. There were a few taggers later on and the odd outline."[57] In Christchurch, it is the graffiti artists of the early to mid-nineties that are credited as starting the scene and have taken on the "old school" identity. Due to its size, the developing Christchurch graffiti culture was unique, as artist Dcypher explained in 2005, there were: "[l]ots of young dudes tagging old ladies fences, and about 10 to 15 painting pieces on the regular for the past two years. We are all from different crews but always paint together, it's a real small scene so there is no room for any conflict. The thing about the Christchurch scene is if anyone gets good they leave for bigger and better things!"[58] This echoes the city's wider problem of retaining young creatives, and Dcypher himself, now based in Los Angeles, eventually followed suit, finding more opportunity away from his home town. [59]

But despite this relatively small community, graffiti has had a notable presence in Christchurch. The more stylistically and technically developed guerrilla forms have developed in peripheral locations largely hidden from the view of daily pedestrians, such as the train tracks adjacent to Moorhouse Avenue (which formed a "Wall of Fame" for many years), the Deans Avenue Sale Yards, which presented glimpses of layered line and colour to passing cars, and various other hidden or obscured sites further from the central city, such as the Waltham "Ghost Yard" **(Figs. 3.10-3.12)**. The lack of commuter trains may have resulted in a less visible presence within the city in the manner of New York's famed subway cars, whose visibility across the city were a major aspect of the art form's public mobility, but the adornment of freight trains has afforded Christchurch graffiti artists' work to be spread outside the city limits (while tagging and "scribing" (or scratching a tag into a surface) have been more common in the city's public transport). Due to this peripheral existence, the immediate

[56] O'Donnell, *InForm*, p. 123
[57] Ibid., p. 111
[58] Uncredited, "Ikarus and Dcypher", *Disrupt Magazine*, Number 6, 2005, p. 86
[59] Dcypher returned to his home city in early 2015 as a headline artist for Oi YOU!'s *Spectrum* event, the follow-up to *Rise*.

experience of graffiti in Christchurch has, for most, been the tagging that often draws more anger as an affront to private property and brings the most emotional response from authority, media and the general public.

Graffiti's emergence in New Zealand, and therefore Christchurch, has largely been viewed by civic authorities as a problem to eradicate, rather than a reflection of contemporary urban existence.[60] Zemke-White notes that: "Various agencies and city councils in Aotearoa have tried a range of methods to stem the 'problem' of graffiti… Despite the best efforts of police and local government, the illicit aspect of the art form remains intact."[61] In 2008, legislation cracked down on access to aerosol cans and a significant increase in the fines and punishment that could be applied to people charged with graffiti vandalism (and even retailers found to have sold paint to minors).[62] However, not all measures to stem illegal graffiti have been punitive, and several initiatives have attempted to harness the creative abilities of young graffiti writers, with workshops and mural projects, highlighting a complex relationship between the city and graffiti. Perhaps the most notable example in Christchurch was the Christchurch City Council run *Project Legit*, which provided the opportunity for young graffiti writers to channel their creative expressions in sanctioned ways, from tutored classes to public murals. The organisation, which included a number of graffiti artists as tutors, including Dcypher and Ikarus at various times, as well as youth workers, aimed to alter both graffiti writers' motivations and public perceptions about the art form. *Project Legit* saw the production of a number of graffiti murals around the city, from schools to underpasses, businesses to power boxes **(Fig. 3.13)**.[63] If sanctioned mural projects provided a public visibility, graffiti artists also exhibited their work in various venues, from galleries to cafés and retail spaces, ranging from independently organised projects to shows in established institutions, such as the Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA).[64] When the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's new Worcester Boulevard premises was under construction in 2001, local, national and international graffiti artists painted the surrounding hoardings, as part of a wider 'Hip Hop Don't Stop' festival. Organised by graffiti artist Pest5, the project was initiated with the support of the Gallery, who noted that the new Gallery "will embrace all aspects of New Zealand's dynamic arts scene and reflect the innovative and new as well the traditional and

[60] This is a global issue, the discussion of cities across the world combatting the presence of illegal graffiti and street art is a widespread concern of writers. For instance, the battle against graffiti on New York's subways is documented in Austin's *Taking the Train*.
[61] O'Donnell, *InForm*, p. 9
[62] Thomasin Sleigh, "How can they ban graffiti?", *The Press*, p. D4; Rosa Shiels, "Art or eyesore?", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, March 1-2, 2008, p. D1
[63] Shiels, "Art or eyesore?", *The Press*, pp. D1-D2
[64] CoCA initially held an exhibition of skateboard art in 2001 with further shows in successive years, while the show avoided an explicit connection to graffiti and street art, local and international artists from these cultures were participants in the *Board Art* shows, including Jacob Yikes and Otis Frizzell amongst a number of others.

established forms of local art."[65] Yet despite this declaration, Pest5 recalled in 2003 that the Gallery had not really displayed much interest until the realisation that there was some publicity to be gained: "[T]hat was just the Gallery pimping us for some free publicity. I approached them with the concept which they initially turned down, but after realising the PR opportunity they agreed, not contributing anything asides from permission and milking it in the media as their own idea."[66] Furthermore, the institution has kept the inside, and collection, free from the presence of graffiti and street artists. While these murals and exhibitions ensured graffiti had a varied presence in the pre-quake city, they were still largely peripheral aspects of the city's cultural identity, positioned as outsiders in the local art world.

Although relatively strong and popular in Auckland and Wellington by the first decade of the new Millennium, street art was less prominent in Christchurch, lacking any artists with the national profile of North Island peers. Although there was some sense of social overlap between graffiti and street artists, existing distinctions between the two remained and street artists shared a less defined sense of community. The often individual practice of street artists removes the more direct flow of influence and mentorship that is an embedded aspect of graffiti culture, and in particular the role of crews as collectives of artists. While tagging, throw-ups and larger graffiti pieces were well established in the city, a smaller selection of stencils, paste-ups, stickers and other forms of urban painting were also evident.[67] Numerous examples were scattered across the city, such as Inkest's Swoon-like paste ups of street characters in alleyways or larger-than-life burlesque female figures under the Colombo Street underpass **(Figs. 3.14, 3.15)**, the stencils of cartoon animal heavy metal bands by Metal **(Figs. 3.16)**, or the non-traditional imagery and techniques of graffiti artists such as Fiasko and Dcypher.

Given the attraction of street art to young people and the number of visual arts courses and students in the city, the relative lack of street artists pre-quake might be surprising. Globally, working on the street provides an increasingly attractive field for younger artists, including those with arts educations, providing a sense of anti-establishment freedom alongside potential opportunities due to the increasing influence, exposure and popularity. Christchurch's small street art scene might have reflected the dominance of graffiti writing culture, but also the lack of cross over opportunities in the city's network of galleries, where established art world interests have been preferred. Street art has also faced the same problem with defection raised by both Strongman and Dcypher. Artist and ex-Christchurch resident Brians, who moved to Melbourne in 2009, explained that his hometown could

[65] "Graffiti on the Gallery", http://www.ccc.govt.govt.nz/MediaReleases/2001/April/GraffitiOnTheGallery.asp, accessed, March 29, 2003
[66] Interview with artist, September 27, 2003
[67] Although, as has been evident in many locations, Christchurch graffiti writers were utilising these various techniques too, a reflection of the speedy and less risky tactics offered by stickers and stencils.

simply not sustain his creative output, noting Christchurch lacked Melbourne's creative scene, which "feeds you subconsciously and everyone is so on their game it forces you to step up."[68] Brians, who founded Melbourne-based crew *Germs Eat Giants* in response to an artistic outburst inspired after experiencing the February quake while on a visit home **(Fig. 3.17)**, provides yet another example of a recurring issue that spreads across all of the city's art communities, from the institutional arts world to the relatively 'outsider' graffiti and street art scenes.

An array of factors, from size and demographics, to the nature of the city's art scene and the insular nature of graffiti, have ensured a unique urban art scene in Christchurch in comparison to Auckland, Wellington and other cities around the world noted for graffiti and street art. However, the earthquakes were to provide not only a physical shift of the terrain, but a new view of the city's creative landscape and graffiti and street art, already parts of the city's streets, have proved to be key components. While not new additions, graffiti and street art's public nature has been shunted forward in the post-quake setting, pre-disposed to an engagement with the broken streets and buildings in a way unique from art world and dominant public art concerns. If the role of art was necessarily re-considered in the wake of the earthquakes, graffiti and street art were able to provide an immediate response in both content and example.

Conclusion: Marking fences, making sense

If the rebuild process has ensured architecture's role within civic identity and personal memory has been an interesting narrative for a number of commentators, the earthquake experience also highlighted the social role of private and public spaces. People's homes and important community spaces were ripped away, either by the force of nature, or eventually by political decision-making. In the wake of the quakes people congregated in parks, squares, and open streets, sharing their stories and offering support at informal gatherings, grouping together to demonstrate frustration or opposition. The open and damaged spaces of the city have served as sites of communication both verbal and visual, from the official to the guerrilla, from the declarative to the aesthetic. Amongst the continued, and often frustrating, presence of thousands of road cones, kilometres of temporary fencing and ubiquitous signs signalling closed streets, one-way passages and restricted access areas, the built environment has been populated with a range of creative projects and interventions. These additions, from spray painted names and playful characters to massive murals, has reflected and

[68] Interview with artist, February 7, 2013

referenced both the experience of post-quake life and the opportunities found in the physical environment, representative of a new creative approach to the city's streets.

Art writer Andrew Paul Wood, reviewing a post-earthquake exhibition in June 2011, noted that art "is used to being shunted to the margins of mainstream society, which means it is fragile and suffered badly in the quake, but it is also resilient, entrepreneurial and adaptive, being one of the first things to spring back to kickstart the healing."[69] Indeed, several months after the February earthquake, Justin Paton declared that art "just doing its thing feels consoling and wonderfully distracting at this time."[70] However, art "just doing its thing" would be a difficult proposition in the post-disaster city. A new approach to art in the ever-changing spaces of Christchurch proved necessary, especially to enable a connection with citizens who might have found the white walls of an art gallery too far removed from their daily experiences. In the wake of the quakes the art world adapted to the changed city in expected ways, in many ways seeking to re-establish the way things were and providing interior spaces for art to exist. Since 2011, new (and in some cases temporary) exhibition spaces have been established, such as 183 Milton (artist Tim Middleton turning his home into an exhibition space), or Dog Park, which utilised a storage unit space in Waltham. Existing galleries relocated to new sites; Jonathan Smart Gallery shifted to Neil Dawson's suburban Linwood studio in 2012 before opening its new premises in Addington in 2014. While projects such as the Christchurch Polytechnic's *Art Box* project, eventually launched in 2013, created portable studio and exhibition spaces that attempted to embrace the city's transitional state.

However, despite these initiatives, the loss of working and exhibition spaces also quickly highlighted a potential response to the new landscape: the city itself as a site for the creation and dissemination of work. The cityscape itself offered an almost unlimited (and constantly changing) number of sites for people to transform, as well as intriguing juxtapositions that could be explored. Since 2011, art has been found across the post-quake city as signs of life and rebirth, and equally, as contributions to the reconstitution of the city; engaging with loss and change, the revelation of the structures of urban and suburban existence, and even creating political discourses. Although this alternative did not suit everyone, logistically, conceptually or even aesthetically, for others it was an opportunity to gain exposure or explore new possibilities, or perhaps most importantly, respond to the surrounding environment. If members of the city's art community, more acclimatised to making and presenting their work inside studios and galleries, were challenged to consider new approaches, graffiti and street art, public expressions with do-it-yourself approaches, were already predisposed to make use of the

[69] Andrew Paul Wood, "Seismic adventures in tsunami of art", *The Press* (*GO Arts* Section), Friday, June 10, 2011, p. 10
[70] Virginia Were, "When the dust settles", *Art News New Zealand*, p. 78

post-quake landscape. Importantly, graffiti and street art have been adaptable, able to operate on multiple levels, both directly referring to the earthquake experience, or in the words of Paton, “just doing its thing”. Guerrilla or un-commissioned art is able to avoid the organisational and logistical difficulties apparent in the production of public art (exacerbated by the post-disaster setting), providing more direct and immediate interventions. If large scale sculpture and public works of art incorporated into new buildings and architecture were understandably slow to appear in the “transitional city”, less permanent additions and specifically the influence and presence of graffiti and street art have been prominent from an early point. The responses to the post-quake landscape can be considered within a realisation of the state of the city as changed and changing, loaded with associations as well as almost infinite opportunity and possibility. It is within this view that graffiti, street art and art in the streets more generally can be considered as an increasing part of the wider arts community, as well as a unique part of a more global and specific (albeit constantly evolving) phenomenon.

Figures:

Figure 3.1: Neil Dawson, *Chalice*, 2001, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.2: Phil Price, *Nucleus*, 2006, High Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.3: Regan Gentry, *Flour Power*, 2008, Colombo Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.4: William Trethewey, *First World War Citizens War Memorial,* 1937, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.5: Thomas Woolner, *Godley Statue*, 1907, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.6: Frances J. Williamson, *Queen Victoria Statue*, 1903, Victoria Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.7: David Marshall, *Corgis*, 2003, High Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.8: Sara Hughes, *Under Over*, 2013, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.9: Chris Heaphy, *Whare*, 2013, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.10: Deans Avenue Sale Yards, Riccarton (photo August 2012)

Figure 3.11: Moorhouse Avenue Railway underpass, central city/Sydenham (photo April 2013)

Figure 3.12: DTR collaboration (Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Dcypher), "end of an Era", Waltham "Ghost Yard", Waltham (photo August 2013)

Figure 3.13: Dcypher, Project Legit mural, c.2009, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.14: Inkest (attributed), New Regent Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 3.15: Inkest, Moorhouse Avenue underpass, central city (photo March 2012)

Figure 3.16: Metal, Carlton Mill Road, Merivale (photo February 2012)

Figure 3.17: Brians, Colombo Street, central city (photo November 2012)

3: Subterranean suburban homesick blues: The suburban experiences of the Christchurch earthquakes

"I'm on the pavement, thinking about the government"

- **Bob Dylan, *Subterranean Homesick Blues***

"It is mile after mile of shattered suburbia."[1]

- **Journalist Charlie Gates on Christchurch's residential red zone**

"The earthquakes threw us all in Christchurch together literally. Neighbours who had never, or hardly ever, spoken to each other began to behave like Blackball and Runanga mining people. They came, they gathered, they shared homes, food, water and care."[2]

- **Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, poet**

Introduction: Suburban ghosts

In the still of early morning, behind a small, picturesque paling fence, a suburban home glows against the darkened dawn sky overhead. But rather than a sliver of light radiating from the crack of closed curtains suggesting the privacy of home, the interior of the house is exposed, emanating electric light. The front of the house is stripped bare; the weather boards removed to reveal the barren white-

[1] Charlie Gates, "Demography – The loss of history", in Paul Gorman, ed., *A City Recovers – Christchurch Two Years after the Quakes*, Auckland, Random House, 2013, pp. 45-61
[2] Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, *Shaken Down 6.3 – Poems from the second Christchurch earthquake, 22 February 2011*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2012, p. 52

washed interior, providing a view of what were once apparently a living room and a bedroom. In appearance, the house resembles a stage set, awaiting players to bring it life. Yet despite the intuition that a bustling family might soon rise and bring the scene to life, there is no activity. The rooms are ghostly empty and still, a state exacerbated by the almost celestial glow. The house's remaining skeletal exterior, with window frames apparently hanging in mid-air, demarcates inside from outside, the light from the surrounding darkness. If I had not been present on an empty street in Avonside that morning, watching a film crew document the transformation, I would not have been aware of the reality surrounding the freshly manicured lawns and painted house. The cracked streets, broken and abandoned homes, and wild, overgrown neighbouring yards and gardens, revealed that the illuminated house was one of the thousands within Christchurch's suburban residential red zone, where neighbourhoods deemed unfit for rebuild have slowly dissipated, leaving behind empty homes and silent streets. Yet, even if the desolate surroundings were unavoidable reminders of the fate of these suburbs, the evocative stillness of the empty, glowing home also brought the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes on many suburban families and communities literally to light. It was amongst this haunting red zone setting of lingering memories and newly empty reality that New York-based, Australian artist Ian Strange completed his larger project *Final Act* (2013), an investigation of the suburban home as a "social and emotional icon" that saw the artist and his crew fleetingly restore light and a sense of life to four vacated red zone houses.[3] In these fleeting rejuvenations, aspects of the quakes' suburban impact were made apparent, associations that had become faded were triggered amongst the largely empty setting. Despite the abundance of empty broken homes regularly encountered in the city's worst affected suburbs, watching Strange and his crew transform that Avonside house, the experience of the residential red zone, and by extension the wider quake-affected suburbs, became even more apparent. If Strange's work evoked reflections of memories, change and loss in Christchurch's red zone suburbs, other suburban areas utilised art, often with an independent spirit and in many cases reflecting the tropes and tactics of graffiti and street art, to express the varied sentiments of post-quake life, from acknowledging the loss of familiar community landmarks, to transforming and renewing broken homes and streets, and expressing frustration at the recovery process.

The Christchurch earthquake experience has been distinctly dichotomous, divided between the story of the stricken central city, and the narratives of life in the deeply affected suburbs, and particularly the water bound areas on the eastern side of the city.[4] The majority of Christchurch's population has

[3] http://ianstrange.com/finalact/about.php, accessed January 6, 2015

[4] Nominally, the distinction of "urban" and "suburban" is relatively clear. An urban space is that within a town or city, and is constructed as distinct from the rural sphere. Suburban, as it would suggest, is relative to the outlying districts of a city, areas that retain elements of urbanity, but also traditionally embrace more open

long resided amongst the green lawns of the sprawling medium-density suburban neighbourhoods rather than within the central city.[5] The city's suburbs have developed distinct identities, often marked by unique geographical surroundings, but also by socio-economic demographics, perhaps heightened by the relatively small urban inner city.[6] As a result of this residential make-up and the largely inaccessible state of the central city in the wake of February 22nd, it was the suburbs where most people experienced the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes.[7] While there were fewer deaths in the comparatively open and low rise surroundings of the suburbs in the February quake, the impact of the disaster on day-to-day life was quickly apparent. The visual effects of the earthquakes provided an unavoidable backdrop for the daily routines of suburbia, which now also included tasks such as collecting water, using portable toilets or digging away mounds of silt.[8] Suburban neighbours and communities shared their ongoing struggles, from the fear and nervousness caused by aftershocks, to the frustrating dramas of land zonings and insurance decisions. Amongst these tribulations, and throughout suburban spaces, art (and a diverse array of public visual expressions) provided expressions of these experiences, at times through explicit earthquake references or acts of communication, at other times by simply transforming or exploring the impacted physical environment.

Since February 2011, the wide variety of visual interventions in Christchurch's worst affected suburbs has ranged from hand-painted messages to large-scale public art projects, from graffiti and street art,

---

spaces and the inclusion of (often highly manufactured) elements of nature, developed to afford citizens respite from the bustle of the urban city without the sense of distance between the urban and rural spheres. These definitions do little to uncover or further explain the more nuanced differences that have developed over time and the difficulties in global variations of physical and social organisation.

[5] The definition of Christchurch's suburbs is not always distinct, some areas drift into others. However, despite such difficulties, specific suburbs are well established with unique identities. Indeed, while the residential areas around the fringes of the central city exude a suburban appearance, with villa-style houses with front lawns more common than high-rise tenements with stoops, there are still demarcations of "inner" and "outer" suburbs. Alongside this dichotomy, there is a further distinction between the eastern and western suburban parts of the city, especially in light of the ongoing struggles facing the more affected eastern side of the city, which is often considered in relation to long held socio-economic differences.

[6] Christchurch occupies a diverse landscape, surrounded by the Port Hills and coastline, as well as starching inland. As a result, many suburbs have distinct appearances.

[7] *Sunday Star Times* columnist Rod Oram has noted that at the time of the earthquakes, roughly 7,000 people resided within Christchurch's Four Avenues and that the central city recovery plan aimed to increase this number to 20,000, despite there being "nothing in the plan… to drive that." (Oram, "Rebuild needs a rethink", *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, August 5, 2012, p. D24). The desire to increase the number of central city residents pre-dated the earthquakes, and was a central premise for the intended 2010 SCAPE Biennial, which aimed to investigate "questions regarding inner-city revitalisations and urban consolidation plans for Christchurch." (Blair French, Julia Morison and William Field, "Post-Earthquake Introduction", in French, ed., *SCAPE 2010 Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space Volume One: Guide and Reader*, Christchurch, Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2010, unpaginated insert)

[8] Sixteen people died in suburban Christchurch as a result of the February 22nd earthquake. Deaths were recorded in homes, suburban businesses, and in outdoor spaces. (Uncredited, "In Memoriam: Those We Lost", *The Press*, Wednesday, February 22, 2012, p. 2)

and including what might be described as independent public art. I have already acknowledged Schacter's employment of the term in his 2013 book *The World Atlas of Graffiti and Street Art*, where he declares it covers certain forms of art made in the public sphere outside institutional influence or commission.[9] But here I expand upon Schacter's (and Abarca's) use, framing independent public art within a distinct local influence and the range of public interventions, including smaller-scale sanctioned public projects produced without institutional support, many of which draw from folk and vernacular art, while still including graffiti and street art within its scope. Such interventions have served as symbols not exclusively of emptiness and loss, but also of presence, communication and the issues facing individuals, families and communities in post-quake suburbia. This chapter draws from some of the most affected suburban locations across the city. Although many areas were badly affected, including satellite locations such as Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Brooklands, the examples included here are primarily from the residential red zone setting of Strange's *Final Act*, the port township of Lyttelton, the eastern coastal villages of Sumner and New Brighton, and the centrally located "urban" suburb of Sydenham. These discussions do not attempt to recount each suburb's earthquake experience in depth, but instead investigate the unique experiences and responses evident in the art found in the streets and public spaces of these locations. These suburban locations unveil the complexities of public and private space, and provide both shared, overlapping and divergent narratives, often reflecting the specific concerns of these various communities as much as a wider experience evident throughout the city. An array of spaces, from private to public, emptying and vacant, to recovering sites of activity, have hosted artistic interventions. While the suburban home is evident as a forum for expression and transformation in a number of examples, the communal (and notably commercial) spaces of various settings are also prominent, revealing the unique nature of the suburbs as simultaneously sites of private existence and public community. While damaged homes became visual forums for diverse messages and interventions (including reflections on the loss of these once private spaces), vacant lots and abandoned neighbourhoods became playgrounds for intrepid explorers, and communal and commercial spaces were utilised for projects of revitalisation and reactivation on both large and small scales.[10]

[9] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 9

[10] In each case the key public (largely commercial) areas of these suburbs are outdoor spaces, rather than the indoor malls that mark much of the city's suburban experience. "Mall Culture" has created not only a sense of suburban self-sufficiency, but also "public" spaces that are highly privatised and controlled. While malls offer the appearance of shared public space, they are highly designed for control, where access, freedom of movement and activity are monitored and dictated. There is little sign of any free expression inside these monolithic spaces of consumption. The power and control of indoor malls can be contrasted with the range of guerrilla and unexpected expressions found in outdoor malls that are presented in this chapter.

The creative contributors to the suburban landscapes range from those with no previous artistic experience, to guerrilla graffiti and street artists and even established art world figures, in many cases problematising the definition of these distinct realms (and another reason for the attraction of independent public art). Many of the examples discussed in this chapter may not be commonly acknowledged as "traditional" graffiti or street art. Indeed, often produced by those who would deny such a title, their immediacy as post-quake gestures with specific intentions and relationships to suburban communities, personal experiences and private and public spaces, highlights the difficulties in neat categorisation. However, influences and resonances of urban art are both explicit and suggested in a variety of ways. While this further complicates the definition of graffiti and street art, it also reveals that while community-centric concerns are not always an evident aspect of the rebellious and self-involved nature of graffiti writing or the playful in-situ jokes of post-graffiti street art, the tactics and material forms of each have been evident and fitting in post-quake suburban Christchurch. Alongside this subtle or suggested influence, the more explicit presence of graffiti and street art has often exposed the issues relevant to the varied suburban experiences, even if such a connection and effect was unintentional. As such, the presence and influence of graffiti and street art in post-quake suburbia, while not always overt, has been complex, from inclusive participation in organised community projects, to opportunistic interventions that have taken advantage of the broken, and often abandoned spaces, and somewhere in between, the compulsion to address a surrounding environment in need of transformation.

The lights are on: Ian Strange's *Final Act* and the residential red zone

Strange's larger *Final Act* project represented the transition of red zone homes from private spaces to exposed public symbols of the quakes' impact.[11] The residential red zone provides a unique component of Christchurch's post-quake suburbs, where there has been no sense of recovery or revitalisation as found in other suburban areas. In *Final Act*, created as part of the street art festival *Rise* in late 2013, Strange utilised the suburban residential red zone as the conceptual and physical backdrop to explore themes of loss, change, memory and the attachment to place, all filtered through the unavoidable impact of the earthquakes upon Christchurch families, homes, neighbourhoods and communities. Strange spent months planning, preparing and executing *Final Act*, both from his overseas base and while in Christchurch. The artist and his crew worked alongside a range of local

[11] Having lived in Bexley, one of the city's most affected suburbs, I keenly felt the transition from populated to vacant. Exploring the emptied streets, memories of my time living in the suburb flooded back, almost every vacated house and empty lot triggering a recollection.

figures and authorities, including CERA and the red zone home-owners, to realise *Final Act*. Engaging directly with the physical landscape of the residential red zone, four dilapidated homes were transformed; overgrown lawns mowed, picket fences tidied, and weatherboards re-painted. The homes were imbued with a new, if temporary (and ultimately final), lease of life that contrasted with the wild surroundings of the red zone.[12]

The residential red zone is a legacy of the earthquakes' impact upon suburban Christchurch, spreading from the central city and sprawling eastward, affecting some 8000 or more homes and covering an area approximately four times the size of Hagley Park.[13] The suburbs that form much of the residential red zone, such as Avondale, Avonside, Bexley, Burwood, Dallington, New Brighton and Southshore, suffered in September 2010, with streets flooded with water, lawns swamped by the muddy effects of liquefaction and houses noticeably cracked and sunken. Yet February proved a death knell to many of these neighbourhoods, the fate of homes and therefore suburban communities, sealed by further land damage. As residents and then homes disappeared, these red zone neighbourhoods were rendered almost unrecognisable. Houses were left empty, others stripped down **(Fig. 4.1)**, demolished, or in some cases, lifted and transported across town to a new setting, leaving only outlines of a past occupancy in the turf. *The Press* reporter Charlie Gates described the sad setting of the largely deserted residential red zone almost two years after the February 2011 quake:

> There are hollow-eyed houses leaning towards one another like conspirators. There are pockmarked streets covered with puddles and gravel… There are houses where burglars have stripped out all the windows and fittings. There are homes where departing residents have scattered broken furniture and toys across the front yard. A powerless and angry gesture...[14]

Over time, the red zone's built environment continued to deteriorate. In some cases these suburban neighbourhoods have returned to expanses of grassy paddocks, leaving no trace of their former occupants save for recognition triggered by memories. This type of change was loaded with an emotional baggage of lives lived in these neighbourhoods, on these streets, and in these houses and yards. Years of nesting into suburban homes, often over generations, were quickly undone by the impact of the earthquakes. In *A City Recovers*, a 2013 publication by *The Press*, spanning science, housing, suburbia, insurance, and the arts, amongst other recovery issues, red zone home owner Liz Cammock explained that the loss of her house meant dealing with the memories of weddings and birthdays and numerous stories from her family's history: "There is a rich narrative… It can't be

[12] The houses were located in close vicinity to each other, giving the sense of a neighbourhood being brought back to activity, despite this not being apparent in the documented images and ephemera in the museum exhibition.
[13] Gates, "Demography", in *A City Recovers*, pp. 45-61.
[14] Ibid.

replaced. You just have to let it go. There is a lot of grieving that goes into that."[15] The atmospheric *Final Act,* marked by an emptiness and a sense of passing, was also inevitably imbued with the associations and memories of the lives once lived in that now empty setting.

Inside the red zone, Strange fleetingly rejuvenated a selection of empty homes, exposing the fragility of spaces often taken for granted as a constant aspect of suburban life. Each of the four *Final Act* houses was transformed in an unexpected manner alongside a sense of rejuvenation. While Strange removed the exterior weatherboards of the first house, a second was "sliced" horizontally by the removal of the middle stretch of weather boards, allowing a band of light to emanate out, like a treasure box glowing from the inside. The third intervention cut large circular incisions into the top of two neighbouring houses, with beams of light shot upwards into the sky from the disc-shaped holes. The surprising alterations of the four *Final Act* houses evoked Gordon Matta-Clark's 1974 work *Splitting*, where the American artist cut a cleave through a New Jersey house, "splitting" the domicile in two. But while Matta-Clark's transformative "cut" may have rendered the suburban home into a formal object, due to their location Strange's subjects were also imbued with the earthquake experience and the associated notions of home and loss felt in affected suburbs across the city. Furthermore, the use of light, provided by generators due to the "switching off" of the red zone area, provided a sense of presence that was ultimately not there, a surrogate for human occupancy. While often associated with habitation and presence, the light in *Final Act* was entwined with the lack of presence it exposed, like a trace of slowly dissipating memories. Emptiness was a real aspect of the residential red zone, it was also importantly imbued with the suggestion of those things now missing. But if the light in Strange's work suggested the disappearance of the communities that filled these houses, it had taken time for these suburban areas to reach this state, for families to leave and homes to be demolished and streets and yards to become sites of memory rather than occupation. Although the *Final Act* homes were largely void of the detritus of their former residents (white garments were hung on the clothes line of one property), the light offered a fragile connection between the pre- and post-quake state of the houses.

Ian Strange is known to many by his street alias Kid Zoom, once famously referred to by billboard subversion icon Ron English as "Rembrandt with a Spray Can."[16] He began painting graffiti in Perth in the late 1990s, influenced by local artists, but as he developed his own style, his street work took on a painterly quality that exhibited his virtuosity with the aerosol technique. His work also revealed, in both subject and style, a darkness that Schacter has described as a result of necessity, but also of his

[15] Ibid., p. 48
[16] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 382

suburban background: "The angst and anger that this often claustrophobic urban existence can provoke was what he believed originally led him into art in the first place."[17] This relationship with suburbia has formed an ongoing, and increasingly explicit preoccupation within Strange's work. Kid Zoom's street work, including realistic skulls and grotesque characters with tiny, detailed features swirling amidst large swathes of warped, tactile flesh, gained the artist popularity, but his practice as Ian Strange has investigated different mediums and modes of presentation to extend the conceptual nature of his work.[18] Elements of aerosol art remain in more sparingly used flashes (although absent in *Final Act*), but Strange's practice increasingly focusses upon the creation and documentation of evocative interventions, productions and performances, in both real and contrived environments. Strange's name-change and investigation of more diverse practices reflect a desire to produce work unrestrained by prefixes or qualifications, yet through an engagement with our social spaces, he has retained an underlying association with his street roots. Strange's career trajectory echoes that of many artists who have shifted between street and gallery practices, often evolving their approaches to suit a new environment while still retaining traces of their initial background.[19] While the methods, modes of presentation and scale of his work has evolved, Strange's graffiti and street art background is evident in his ongoing interest in physical environments and their social meanings, and in particular his investigation of the symbolic qualities of the suburban home as a structure that can be subverted and transformed to unlock aspects of our relationship with our surroundings.

Christchurch's suburban make-up and the impact of the quakes upon the residential red zone, provided Strange a powerful setting to continue his investigation of the suburban home as a ruminative icon. Strange's *Home* (2011) and *Suburban* (2011-2013) provide a conceptual and material lineage for *Final Act*, while also suggesting counterpoints to the specific narrative of the Christchurch project.[20] Like *Final Act*, both *Home* and *Suburban* raised issues of change through the physical form of the suburban home. *Home*, produced for the 2011 *Outpost Festival* inside the industrial Turbine Hall on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour, was a memory-based, full-sized reproduction of Strange's childhood home in Perth, adorned with an aerosol painted skull, symbolic of his New York graffiti career. Three Holden Commodore cars (serving as symbols of Australian suburban mobility and distance) were parked outside, explosively destroyed by the sledge hammer and spray can-wielding

[17] Ibid.

[18] Kid Zoom notably made use of the glass planes of bus shelter advertising shells to place his work, affording a subversion of the use of physical space as a site for advertising.

[19] Similarly, as Babington notes, galleries interested in artists with graffiti and street backgrounds have also helped facilitate the merging of these environments to create a successful transition. (Babington, *Space Invaders*, p. 41)

[20] 2014's *Landed*, which saw Strange place a half-submerged, blacked-out house on the concrete forecourt of the Art Gallery of South Australia for the 2014 Biennial of Australian Art, was a continuation of the investigation of these themes.

artist in a filmed performance.[21] Despite its personal and autobiographical nature, the project was also based on an archetypal reading of the concepts of home and memory. Indeed, *Home* was a replication of a suburban memory rather than an intervention into real suburbia. It was produced in an entirely different location, both geographically (translated from Perth to Sydney) and contextually (inside an enclosed industrial hall), and based on adolescent recollections rather than specific plans. As art writer Simone Douglas explained, although it would appear that Strange had rebuilt his childhood home, it would be "more accurate to say that he has taken the marrow of the idea of home from his memory of his childhood house. The house is a transmission of sorts. It is cinematic in idea. This house was never there."[22] The specifics of the reconstructed home may have come from Strange's memories, but *Home* was also a universal evocation of our attachment to place and our past, even if such spaces are no longer physically or emotionally accessible in the way they once were.

If *Home* was a specific investigation of Strange's teenage roots in suburban Perth, *Suburban* continued the investigation of his "conflicted relationship with the suburbs" within a more wide-ranging geography.[23] With *Suburban*, a project that spanned several years (2011-2013), rather than recreating an element of the suburban experience, Strange entered suburbia itself, much like he would the Christchurch residential red zone. *Suburban* saw Strange transform a number of homes in neighbourhoods in cities across the United States.[24] Strange engaged with the homes in various ways; painting one with a signature aerosol skull, another with an ominous large red 'X', as if marking condemnation or tragedy. Another was painted entirely red. Two houses were ultimately burned down, imbuing each with a sense of doom and decay. As with *Final Act*, each intervention was documented and the resulting films, photographs and salvaged remnants formed the exhibited elements of *Suburban*. Like the pre-determined fate of the *Final Act* homes, the *Suburban* houses were no longer occupied, some abandoned, while others were ear-marked for demolition to make way for redevelopment, symbols of a socio-economic impact rather than a natural disaster. It was this emptiness, similarly evident in *Final Act*, which enabled their reduction, as David Hurlston and Polly Smith suggest, to "symbols we can react against", symbols of the monotonous, manicured dread of

[21] Ian Strange, *Home*, http://ianstrange.com/home/video.php, accessed September 14, 2015
[22] Simone Douglas, *Tell the World I'm Coming Home*, http://ianstrange.com/home/text.php, accessed February 5, 2014
[23] Ian Strange, *Suburban*, http://ianstrange.com/suburban/video.php, accessed February 5, 2014
[24] The interventions were staged in locations including Ohio, Detroit, New Jersey, Alabama, New York and New Hampshire. Some of the houses were abandoned due to economic downturns, others were slated for demolition in preparation for renewal projects. Strange premiered the documentation of *Suburban* at the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia in late July 2013.

suburbia.[25] The houses were divested of their specific identities or architectural function, allowing them to exist outside of a "specific time and place", symbolic of more universal concepts.[26]

The emptied residential red zone provided a universal symbol of suburbia and a sense of loss and change that resonated not only with Strange's previous work, but also specifically with the citizens of Christchurch who had seen entire suburban areas quickly wilt and die in the wake of the earthquakes. In *Final Act*, as in *Home*, Strange presented a reductive "marrow" of the idea of the suburban home, but also engaged directly with spaces and structures filled with specific past lives. If the houses lacked *Home*'s autobiographical connection, they were still loaded with real biographical qualities, as well as more universal associations entangled with the nature of suburban existence, all heightened by the reality of the residential red zone's decline. *Final Act* is therefore layered with various potential meanings; Strange's broad evocation of suburbia, the overbearing impact of the Christchurch earthquakes, and then the specific, personal attachment to our lived spaces (including the real residents of the red zone, and at the most intimate level, the former occupants of the *Final Act* houses). While the disparate locations of the *Suburban* homes rendered that project a more broad investigation, the four *Final Act* homes were united in their physical location and bound to the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes. The earthquakes provided a unique lens through which *Final Act* was viewed. The homes and neighbourhoods featured in *Final Act* were altered by an act of nature, not solely by the lengthy passage of time or economic forces. But despite the reality of the red zone houses' past lives, homes where families once lived, Strange's interventions did not return them to their pre-quake states. Instead, they suggested universal and open-ended readings that would ultimately allow the viewer to recall their own attachment to home and suburbia, considered within the frame of the experience of Christchurch's residential red zone.

Despite its inclusion in *Rise*, *Final Act* was not immediately obvious as a work of street art or even public art in a traditional sense. *Final Act* was in effect a two-part project, understood as an intervention performed within the real physical location of the residential red zone, but primarily experienced by its audience as a museum exhibition of the resulting visual documentation, far removed from the context of its actual setting. As a result, *Final Act* must be considered in a different manner to other examples of public post-disaster art, both locally, and in settings such as post-Katrina New Orleans, where artists engaged with areas such as the devastated Lower Ninth Ward, producing work that was experienced directly within the realities of the setting, as in Paul Chan's 2007 staging of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in the open streets, or Mark Bradford's land-locked wooden

[25] David Hurlston and Polly Smith, *Ian Strange: SUBURBAN,* http://ianstrange.com/suburban/text.php, accessed February 5, 2014
[26] http://ianstrange.com/suburban/text.php, accessed January 6, 2015

ark *Mithra* (2008), constructed for the *Prospect.1* biennial. Contained and presented within the walls of an exhibition hall, *Final Act* was removed from the physical immediacy of its engagement with the red zone, which was closed from public viewing while Strange and crew transformed the houses and documented the process. The houses' demolition upon *Final Act's* completion, while conceptually fitting, left no lasting presence for any direct audience engagement (perhaps an apt result in the context of the final state of the emptying red zone where traces of presence have slowly disappeared).

Final Act's process of transformation was documented in photographs, film and salvaged remnants reconfigured as sculptural objects, all of which were then displayed inside the Canterbury Museum, separated from the rest of the *Rise* exhibition, separating the work's disparate components.[27] The darkened spot-lit room presented an evocative environment starkly different from the physical reality of the red zone, yet still importantly exacerbated the sense of emptiness evident in *Final Act*. The museum setting's atmospheric lighting, the constructed images, and most notably the evocative film work (and its accompanying score) emphasised the viewer's position outside of these structures. Looking in from the darkness, the audience almost became implicated in acts of intrusion into the privacy of home, a microcosm of the impact of the earthquakes as a sinister outsider. Four large colour photographic prints of the transformed and illuminated houses lined one wall. A cut-out corner of one house sat in the middle of the room and an exterior wall with an intact glass window was affixed to another wall. Notably, these bulky, reconstituted sculptural forms, remnants of the former tangibility of the homes and their contained histories, were removed from the suburban setting that once gave them purpose **(Figs. 4.2, 4.3)**. However their presence provided a direct connection between the physical reality of the homes and the surrounding two-dimensional images. Projected on the rear wall of the room, a dream-like, looping film work, accompanied by an ominous musical score, added a slow sense of movement; a gentle breeze rustled through the surrounding swaying trees and bushes, like the final sequence of a film in which the tragic ending is inevitable. But if the salvaged sections were completely re-contextualised and the photographs and film were tightly cropped, removing the visible contrast of the empty surrounding streets I had witnessed that early morning, weeks before the exhibition opened, there were still explicit connections to the red zone within the show, albeit positioned at the periphery. In a partitioned corner of the room, photographs, text and drawings provided insights into the red zone setting and the artistic process. The inclusion of these elements ensured the recognition of the specific local histories of the houses and neighbourhoods, but their

[27] Strange worked with a local salvage company to dismantle the homes once *Final Act* was completed. (Charlie Gates, "Film set uses red-zone recycling", *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, January 5, 2014, p. A7)

peripheral placement within the exhibition also emphasised the ability for viewers to draw on personal connections to the earthquakes and more universal evocations of suburbia.

Final Act effectively transformed red zone homes into transitory works of art. The expected privacy, security and sanctity of the suburban home was an evident factor in the project's resonance, but it was also layered with the dissipation of neighbourhoods into ruptured and increasingly abandoned landscapes, a process that revealed the complicated relationship between private and public created by the impact of the quakes. This explicit engagement with the city's earthquake–ravaged Avonside red zone also provides an opportunity to consider the range of expressions found across the city's affected suburbs, many left by residents departing broken homes, others signalling a new presence. If *Final Act* provided an interesting, and relatively high-profile, transformation of suburban homes to explore ideas surrounding these lived spaces, an array of art made in Christchurch's suburbs, and specifically the residential red zone, provided more direct and intimate reflections of the realities of the post-quake experience. These additions have been physically and emotionally entwined with the connection between people and the spaces they inhabit, and in many cases, places people were forced to leave behind, places that while once defined by enclosed privacy, were now public symbols of change.

An early and enduring form of public discourse across many suburbs was found in the hand-written and painted messages that dotted broken streets, fences and houses, from a humorous description of a damaged house's "indoor outdoor flow" as an attractive selling point in New Brighton, to hand-made replacement street signs that attempted to reclaim identity of a neighbourhood, or various signs affixed to street lamps pleading for traffic to slow down, in an attempt to stop already compromised houses from violently rattling when heavy or speeding vehicles passed **(Figs. 4.4, 4.5)**. Christchurch photographer Tim Veling's project *THX 4 THE MEMORIES* (2013), a title taken from a hand painted message daubed on a vacated Bexley house by its departing occupants, captured the sights of the emptying red zone suburbs. Such additions were prominent around the residential red zone and the surrounding suburbs, reflections of the state of physical decline, but also often serving as exorcisms of the stress of the post-quake experience or as expressions of attachments to place that had been forcefully severed. Veling's images reveal the details of the red zone and the experience of those leaving, juxtaposing remnants of life with the more pervasive impact of the exodus.[28] A feature of Veling's photographs are the painted and written messages that appeared on house fronts, fences, boarded windows and other surfaces, expressing a range of emotions and concerns. Indeed, many

[28] *THX 4 THE MEMORIES* was a *Place in Time* exhibition for the 2013 Canterbury Arts Festival. *Place in Time* is an ongoing photographic project recording the city of Christchurch.

houses were bid farewell with messages constructed as if the home was an old friend, a part of the family **(Fig. 4.6)**. Other hand-made signs served as warnings to potential intruders to keep away from an empty property, or simply declared that some houses were still occupied as people defiantly remained amongst the empty houses and vacant lots **(Figs. 4.7, 4.8)**. If *Final Act* evoked a dissipated presence, these messages were much more physically present. Although these signs largely lacked any aesthetic intent, they provided examples of the formation of a visual discourse about life in these emptied spaces. Rather than temporary rejuvenations, they were marked by the visible decline of these houses over time. As the suburbs emptied, these messages were re-contextualised as lingering symbols of the attachment to place and specific structures that would eventually disappear entirely, the "final acts" of those departing. Occupying an interesting, visible position between private and public, they manifested as both personal messages to empty houses, and as declarations to a vanishing audience.[29] While some residents adorned interiors with messages and recollections, retaining a sense of privacy, messages on external walls (or when revealed through deconstruction), served as both intimate connections between people and place, and also ultimately outward symbols of the wider experience of these suburban spaces.[30]

If these written messages were common, the red zone also provided examples of creative interventions that while less specifically entwined with the intimate connection to home, were still indicative of the state of the surrounding setting. A simple intervention on a corrugated fence on the boundary of the red zone suburb of Bexley made a more subtle, understated suggestion of the clearance of this area. The simple addition of eyes transformed blocks of grey anti-graffiti paint on the corrugated fencing that framed Bexley into strange, undefined creatures, apparently living and grazing in the area where only a handful of houses were still occupied **(Fig. 4.9)**. The playful creatures floated ghost-like above the ground, their eyes almost confused as to the barren state of their surroundings. These amorphous creatures were reminiscent of the rising grey silt that resulted from liquefaction, and repeatedly swamped much of Bexley and other water-bound suburbs. A frustrating physical result of the earthquakes, clearing the heavy grey silt that oozed up from the ground became a tiresome routine of life after each significant aftershock.[31] The simplicity of the Bexley creatures and the evocative qualities of their appearance on the fringe of a now empty neighbourhood resonated with

[29] Glen Howey's *Please Demolish with a Kind Heart* (Auckland, PQ Blackwell, 2015) includes a number of photographs of such messages, farewells and adornments, from handprints to a Post-It note on which a child's handwriting reads: "Bye-Bye Oma's house, Nico".

[30] http://www.timjveling.com/thx-4-the-memories, accessed March 3, 2016

[31] It is estimated that 580,000 tonnes of silt were removed from the city in the year following the February 22nd earthquake. (Uncredited, "22/2 A Broken City", *The Press*, Wednesday, February 22, 2012, p. A6)

the experience of the red zone.[32] The grey paint was a cover up of graffiti, yet the blocky shapes left behind were appropriated and given a life of their own, adding a humorous touch to an otherwise desperate area.[33] If the grey blocks were brought to life by the anonymous additions, the original purpose of the paint, to obscure graffiti, raises another presence within the red zone: graffiti as a marker of the abandonment of the area and as new occupants of the empty houses. Despite their abandonment, houses were commonly "buffed" (the "buff" is a term graffiti writers use to describe the removal of graffiti, in reference to the scrubbing of carriages with a chemical solution used by New York's MTA to clean graffiti from trains) within the red zone. The resulting haphazard appearance, rather than maintaining a pleasant appearance, were declarations that these structures were still private spaces to be protected, even with the lack of previous inhabitants. However, as with the graffiti, the blocks of paint, often covering broken windows and rarely matched to the prior colour scheme, further exacerbated the vacant state of these houses.

Amongst the messages and signs of dissipating life, the proliferation of graffiti writing in the red zone and the fringes of nearby suburbs, has signified the encroachment of a new presence, one that has taken advantage of the empty spaces. The appearance of graffiti represented a new, uninvited presence in place of departed residents **(Fig. 4.10)**. The ubiquitous graffiti writing of all sizes and styles across the empty red zone has been a symbol of the abandonment of these suburbs to decay and its claim by opportunistic artists, explorers and vandals. Entire houses were overrun with layered collections of hieroglyphic tags and larger scale pieces covering entire walls, often visible from distance and providing an unexpected addition of colour and form **(Figs. 4.11-4.13)**. In other cases, vacant houses and buildings have been covered in scores of tags and throw-ups, battling for attention despite in many cases being obscured from view.[34] The graffiti writing that has adorned the inside and outside of red zone homes has not referred to loss, change or personal attachment in any explicit or even intended content, they have not been heart-felt farewells like the messages left by departing families. Instead they have been symptomatic of the opportunity presented by such an area for the traditional interests of graffiti writers, the houses serving as blank canvasses. Yet by commandeering these once private settings, the sight of overrun homes was symbolic of the fall of these neighbourhoods. The names that have covered rooftops, walls, and boarded-up windows represent a transformative

[32] The creatures were joined by a crudely spray-painted "Bexley", which served to both denoted the area's identity within its new state, while also positioning the creatures as fitting mascots of the empty post-quake suburb.

[33] A similar example of the transformation of the blocks of paint covering graffiti was found in nearby New Brighton, where a continuous black line turned a field of paint swatches in a buck-toothed character **(Appendix 1: Fig. A1)**.

[34] Although, in some more visible red zone areas, efforts have been made to paint over graffiti, however the impact of these attempts has often rendered the dilapidated houses equally as despondent as the graffiti **(Appendix 1: Fig. A2)**.

presence, not in the fleetingly restorative manner of Ian Strange's *Final Act*, but by turning the empty houses into formal objects decorated in spray paint. The red zone has served as a playground for artists attracted to the opportunity to explore and leave their moniker on the hundreds of available walls, doors and windows inside and out. On an empty house in Wainoni, a piece of graffiti displayed a visual connection to the home it adorned. The silver piece, by members of the JF crew **(Fig. 4.14)**, was stylised with cracks, reminiscent of the supporting structure and surrounding environment, a suggestion that even while maintaining a sub-cultural interest, a reference to the specific setting is possible. The red zone, at least while houses remained standing, awaiting demolition, became a peripheral site for graffiti writers to explore and paint. In the wake the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco, remnants of partially demolished buildings, referred to as "pits", proved attractive for the city's graffiti writers. One might consider the residential red zone (along with an array of other post-quake abandoned buildings) as having provided a similar, although more disparate, setting for Christchurch's graffiti culture.[35] As the setting of private and personal attachment, suburbia is typically where graffiti is most vehemently abhorred and vilified as an attack on property.[36] Within this attachment, the appearance of graffiti might be seen as a further disruption of the residential red zone's once secure nature, an invasion that could not be defended.

If the graffiti in the residential red zone signified the opportunity afforded by the emptiness of the area, in mid-2014, a soon-to-be demolished suburban home was turned over to an array of graffiti artists by the owner, transforming the inside and out into a colourful cacophony of images and names. Homeowner Ren Bell invited an array of artists, including Ikarus, Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Jacob Yikes, Xpres One, Drows, Bexis One and more, to paint his Cranford Street house in the week before its eventual demise, opening the finished product to the public **(Fig. 4.15)**.[37] The house proved popular,

---

[35] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 350

[36] Responses to graffiti encroaching into the private spaces of the suburbs has always been vehement and passionate, a reflection of the construction of suburban space as different from the urban city. The suburban fence it should be noted is a demarcation of the boundary between private and public (and the privacy of one's neighbour), literally a barrier to keep people out of one's proclaimed land. It is therefore unsurprising that these are a popular target of a certain type of graffiti writer, even if they do not explicitly make such an argument. A noticeable trend developed in post-quake Eastern Christchurch, with owners annotating tagged suburban fences with responses intended to embarrass the graffiti writers, such as the addition of "…loves Justin Bieber" after a tag. Media headlines and articles often reflect an anger towards graffiti tagging in suburban areas: Mike Yardley, "Vandals deserve spell behind bars", *The Press*, Saturday, January 5, 2013, p. C8 (in which radio personality Yardley opens with: "Few things in life trigger such instant blood-boiling infuriation that discovering your property has been vandalised by cowardly taggers…"); Joelle Dally, "Tagging plague 'more skanksy than Banksy", *Sunday Star Times*, November 4, 2012, p. A4; Shelley Robinson, "Tagging angers locals", *Pegasus Post*, Monday, December 10, 2012; Christine De Felice, "Tagger faces hefty bill", *The Star*, Wednesday, August 14, 2013, p. 7; Alex Mason, "What scumbags would do this?", *The Star*, Wednesday, September 19, 2012, p. 1-2.

[37] Uncredited, "Street art showcase at demolition house", August 18, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/10392466/Street-art-showcase-at-demolition-house, accessed March 2, 2016

with crowds filtering through to inspect the rooms and walls, the once private spaces essentially turned into a public gallery. Each room was painted from top to bottom, including the exterior and roof, rendering the house a formal object for a bright, bold and ultimately brief finale. If the white-washing of the *Final Act* houses made the absence of their past occupants more obvious, the signs of life within Bell's house were obscured by the layers of lively paint. This transformation both echoed the red zone graffiti and provided an alternative approach, an invited presence that created a "final act" for the home before it was knocked down and rebuilt, emerging briefly as an unexpected sight in comparison to the surrounding houses and relative normality of the suburban setting. The house, in the inner suburb of St Albans, was not entrenched in the red zone, it was surrounded by occupied houses and was visible to the passing traffic. Yet its willing transformation, actively encouraged by the homeowner, echoed both Strange's *Final Act* and its direct intervention upon suburban homes, but also the unsanctioned presence of graffiti writers transforming empty houses in and around the red zone.

The suburban red zone has provided a setting where an array of visual interventions and additions have appeared. While these examples have been disparate and varied, from hand-written messages to large scale projects, they have often raised the associations of suburbia as a site of both private and public experience, and unavoidably the impact of the earthquakes on these spaces as lingering traces and new additions highlighted the disappearance of people who had formed strong attachments to place. But if the red zone was doomed to an imposed erasure, the majority of Christchurch's suburbs recovered and where necessary, rebuilt, even if some were altered irrevocably. The art of post-quake suburban Christchurch has, in these cases, often been cathartic, communal, transformative and reflective of a wide range of contributors, from notable institutions, to graffiti and street artists, and importantly, many without previous experience who were compelled to engage with their surroundings in creative ways.

Life goes on: The suburban earthquake experience, community and change

If the earthquakes brought an abrupt end to the red zone neighbourhoods, the experience also brought many suburban communities together, providing networks of support as the recovery process began and the frustrations of the city's new realities became apparent.[38] In the days, weeks and months that followed, people congregated in streets, checked on neighbours, provided comfort and

[38] Even those displaced were forced to reflect on the memories connected to their old homes, from their neighbours to local amenities.

company, made use of various supply networks, from homes sharing fresh water to impromptu food stalls, and attended community meetings to discuss recovery plans and progress. The blossoming community spirit that the post-quake environment engendered was not unique to Christchurch. Solnit, in her 2010 book *A Paradise Built in Hell*, suggests that disasters, despite the accompanying dread, terror, and loss, often give rise to amazing communities, noting the way in which San Francisco residents reacted to the Loma Prieta earthquake. Solnit recounts how many remembered the post-quake period as a time when neighbourhoods became close-knit support networks. People shared the experience of the days that followed, and as Solnit explains, many loved the sense of community evident in the wake of the earthquake. An acquaintance recounted to Solnit how her neighbourhood had staged barbeques on the streets, and "how gregarious everyone had been, how people from all walks of life had mixed in candlelit bars that became community centers [sic]…"[39] Solnit argues that this type of response, in lieu of centralised organisation, reflects communities taking control of their experience in communal and supportive ways. In post-quake Christchurch, the previously private nature of suburbia was transformed. Journalist and Sumner resident Amanda Cropp highlighted this enduring sense of camaraderie, noting how people had responded to the quakes: "…by helping each other and that renewed sense of community has endured in many areas with the growth of neighbourhood support groups."[40] The impact on the suburban physical environment was also an important aspect of this shared experience, from the loss of homes and cherished community buildings, a firm connection between communities and the public spaces of the suburbs was evident.

But even with the growth of these social support networks, the physical environment provided constant reminders of the quakes' impact. As such, expressions of community have often been entwined with the surrounding environment: messages of support, gestures of remembrance and acts of transformation were all widespread additions to post-quake suburbia. Both individual and collective, parietal to decorative, these additions often signified a shifting attitude to public space, perhaps a response to the forced changes visited upon suburbia. In suburbs across Christchurch important places were lost; places that were not just important for historical reasons, but as sites of intimate memories. Small gestures of remembrance were common across the city's most affected suburbs, engaged with the effects of loss felt by communities and individuals. Ansley has explained the impact on suburban built environments, from beloved homes to significant neighbourhood landmarks, declaring that in the suburbs the bigger buildings may have made the headlines, "but the smaller ones made the difference. All around the city people lost houses and halls, schools and sports

[39] Rebecca Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell – The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*, London, Penguin, 2010, pp. 4-5

[40] Amanda Cropp, "My year of living warily", *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, February 19, 2012, p. C5

clubs, restaurants and pubs and theatres, community centres and churches and corner dairies they had known forever."[41] Even when buildings and debris were cleared away, like the houses in *Final Act*, the empty spaces left behind were often still loaded with meaning and memories, from the intimate to the collective. Amongst this setting of loss and change, creative interventions within these new–found gaps and upon remaining signs of damage, have afforded the chance to reflect on the impact of the quakes on suburban communities. As such, the varied art that filled and marked these spaces dealt with a multitude of issues. In North New Brighton, the plywood boards covering the remnants of the partially demolished Ozone Hotel, itself a notable local building, were utilised by street artist HIM to highlight the loss of small, yet cherished local landmarks. The artist's stencilled silhouette of a young child carrying a paint brush and bucket of paint, stared across the road at an empty lot, transformed into a makeshift community space, wistfully declaring: "I remember when the Kazbah used to be over there" **(Fig. 4.16)**, in reference to a small neighbourhood bar that had been destroyed in the wake of the earthquakes. The child's public recollection illustrated the losses suffered by suburban neighbourhoods, but also the speed of change. Rather than an elder reflecting on a changing landscape over generations, the memories of HIM's young child highlighted how quickly so many community buildings had disappeared in the wake of the quakes, some felled by nature, others by engineering and political decisions.

In May 2011, street artist Delta placed a number of small crosses created from salvaged material from Lyttelton's numerous demolition sites as memorials on the newly vacant lots along London Street, providing another localised act of remembrance, and a farewell to the lost buildings of the portside village. *Crux* **(Figs. 4.17, 4.18)** was a subtle, thoughtful project, reflecting an individual's acknowledgement of the impact of the quakes on the port village's streets, resonating with Strange's *Final Act* in its engagement with the impacted built environment. The title of the project evoked the cross forms, but also suggested both the important and unresolved nature of the impact upon the village's physical identity. Each cross was numbered in reference to its location, and included an acknowledgement of the date of the February earthquake: 22-2-11, presented in the form of a mathematical equation that highlighted the divisible qualities of the numbers, but could also be read as the "death" date of the buildings, echoing the small crosses that dot roadsides memorialising crash victims. Although they lasted only three weeks, the crosses subtly highlighted the now empty spaces along the formerly picturesque main street.[42] The artist described the project as one of remembrance and vision, "acknowledging what had been lost in the heart of the township and looking to the

[41] Ansley, *Christchurch Heritage*, p. 9
[42] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., 2012, p. 256

future."[43] *Crux* acknowledged the role of the missing buildings in the village's history and the lives of the Lyttelton community, thus positioning them as a part of the community. The crosses were not grandiose markers of place in the manner of "official" memorials, but were ephemeral, guerrilla additions. They were small, subtle reminders of what had once stood on that ground. The use of materials salvaged from demolition sites connected the crosses to the buildings that had been lost and at the same time suggested renewal and recovery, a sense of rebuilding that would eventually come. *Crux*'s connection between the material forms of the crosses and the sites they memorialised imbued the work with a direct relationship to space that is often a key component of street art and its subversion of structural forms.

In the case of both *Crux* and HIM's stencil, their unsanctioned nature revealed the need to engage with the altered environment with a sense of immediacy, permission seemingly less urgent than the need to instigate moments of contemplation where the task of clearing away damage had taken priority in the "official" recovery. But while such gestures were a notable feature, the breadth of additions across the suburban post-quake landscape was varied, in appearance, their creators and in the very nature of their production. This diversity illustrates a changing approach to the use of public space in creative ways, in the presence and performances of both art world institutions and those compelled to act and make use of the streets as sites for expression, with the notable influence of graffiti and street art an interesting aspect of this shift.

Shadow boards, shipping containers, stitches and smiles: The varied presence of art in the post-quake suburbs

Public art has long featured in Christchurch's suburbs, but largely without the status often afforded to those examples within the central city. While the majority of the city's most significant art institutions, exhibition spaces, and most notable public art projects have been located within the central city, suburban public art has often been more disparate, and largely limited to community murals, commemorative memorials, and a smaller selection of often durable modernist sculpture. Graffiti, and to a lesser extent street art, it has been noted, have also had a place in local suburbia, often in more peripheral spaces; alleyways, car parks and train tracks, although also on fences and businesses. But with much of the central city out-of-bounds for sustained periods in the wake of February 2011, some

[43] Ibid.

commentators considered a potential post-quake shift towards the suburbs for the city's cultural activities.

In 2012, art writer and curator Justin Paton suggested, somewhat with tongue-in-cheek, that the post-earthquake suburbs could become the new site for public art in the city. As he considered the implications of the closed-off city centre on public art, he ruminated on the role of the suburbs:

> Maybe the problem of the empty centre should actually be seen as a prompt. Maybe artists should do as many others have done and seek spaces further out. Maybe the proving ground for public art henceforth is not the centre but the suburbs. "The Burnside Biennale of Contemporary Art" doesn't have quite the right ring to it. But how about "SCAPE New Brighton", with the empty shops and downtrodden mall reclaimed as an arcade for art?[44]

Inevitably the city's most notable public art projects have largely found their way back into the city's urban core; the presence of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's *Outer Spaces* and *Populate* projects, the SCAPE 7 Public Art Biennial in 2013 (and indeed SCAPE 8 in 2015), and street art events *Rise*, *From the Ground Up* (both 2013) and *Spectrum* (2014 and 2015), all signified the re-establishment of the central city as the preferred site for large scale, well-publicised public art events, indicative of a perceived collective civic importance economically and culturally, as well as the need for anchor projects to revitalise the severely affected inner city.[45] But even if the shift that Paton suggested may not have truly eventuated, the suburbs have nonetheless provided settings for a range of artistic interventions and projects, some with institutional support, many with more independent or community-centric spirits. These suburban examples have not only suggested alternative locations for art, but have also highlighted a wide spectrum of approaches and intended outcomes; from post-quake reflections, to attempts at renewal or transformation. This wide-ranging scope illustrates the open status of the streets as a site of public expression, especially in the wake of such notable upheaval. While much of the art in the most affected suburbs has not been produced by the city's cultural elite, there have been examples of an institutional public art presence, as well as notable large-scale, yet essentially independent projects, each providing a sense of contrast to the smaller informal and often unsanctioned interventions that have populated the post-quake suburbs.

The inner city borough of Sydenham provides an interesting entrance point. Despite the severe impact on its own built environment, Sydenham in many regards operated as a surrogate inner city in the wake of the February earthquake. The presence of art was an important aspect of this post-quake identity. Originally settled as a distinct borough just outside of Christchurch's urban centre, over time

[44] Paton, "Perimeter Notes: A Day Around the Red Zone" in *Bulletin,* B.167, p. 23-24
[45] Although, it is notable that *Rise*, *From the Ground Up* and *Outer Spaces* did have a significant presence in Sydenham, a further reflection of the suburb's inner city status.

Sydenham developed a clear demarcation between the green lawns of the residential area to the south and the commercial and industrial zone between Brougham Street and Moorhouse Avenue. This split complicates the suburb's identity, highlighted by the stretch of Colombo Street that connects the suburb to the CBD and serves as both an entrance to Sydenham and provides a feeling of an extension of the inner city across the Moorhouse Avenue Overbridge.[46] While commercial and communal spaces have been important sites for art in other quake-affected suburbs, the spatial relationship to the central city has ensured Sydenham has experienced a unique public art profile, marked by the presence of a wide range of artists and projects, from the presence of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Gap Filler, to an array of graffiti and street artists. While Sydenham's residential neighbourhoods survived comparatively well, the commercial strip along Colombo Street became the focal point of the suburb's earthquake experience. Many of Colombo Street's iconic brick and stone buildings were badly affected in the September and February quakes, and as a result, the area was vastly altered, dotted with an abundance of empty lots that made the extent of the damage clear and left parts almost unrecognisable. But despite the physical impact (and a bubbling frustration as progress seemingly stalled in the months and years that followed), by late 2011, in comparison to the inaccessible central city, the area had resumed a relative level of functionality.[47] Sydenham eventually became a destination for businesses and cultural institutions that had been forced from buildings locked behind the central city red zone cordon, and with these arrivals, the public presence of art was to become a notable aspect of the area's identity.[48]

A unique aspect of Sydenham's post-quake art has been the presence of institutions and private entities with divergent intentions, appearances and profiles from the often community-minded and independently-produced art found in other suburban areas of the city. The post-quake art world presence in Sydenham included the arrival of several exhibition and gallery spaces alongside the area's existing studios. Contemporary art space The Physics Room and object art gallery Form relocated to

[46] To ensure a separate character from the central city, the "SYDM Quarter" identity was developed to promote the business area as distinct from the central city. To heighten this identity, a sign was placed in the space in front of *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* on Colombo Street. Not only did the sign take advantage of the popularity of the large-scale mural, but the geographic location was also telling, as the sign was clearly visible to cars crossing the Colombo Street overpass entering Sydenham from the central city. (www.sydm.co.nz, accessed 20 March 20 2012)

[47] Georgina Stylianou, "Sydenham rebuild stalemate may end", *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A5

[48] Another inner city suburb, Addington provides another of an inner city suburb that became an interim CBD as the red zone cordon remained in place. Addington, became a 'go-to' destination post-earthquakes, as a number of bars, cafes and live music venues settled in the area to the south-west of the inner city, so much so that was named by *The Lonely Planet* as the most exciting place in Christchurch. (Nicole Mathewson, "Addington makes the travel A-list", http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/7719637/Addington-makes-the-travel-A-list, accessed September 24, 2012).

Sydenham when their inner city premises were damaged.[49] Although The Physics Room eventually returned to its Tuam Street premises in 2013, it provided a notable art world presence in the post-quake suburb.[50] Whilst located in Sandyford Street during 2012, The Physics Room presented *Measure the City with the Body* **(Fig. 4.19)**, utilising shipping containers on a vacant Colombo Street lot to show video and installation works by a number of artists whose work considered the production of art in evolving public spaces of cities around the world, a fitting topic in post-earthquake Christchurch.[51] The use of shipping containers not only reflected Christchurch's love-affair with the steel box structures as "Do-It-Yourself" architectural forms and ubiquitous post-quake icons, but also allowed those who ventured inside to be transported into a contemplative interior, just footsteps from the broken buildings and muddy terrain outside. The effect entwined the experience of the exhibition with the post-quake setting, although not specifically to the suburb of Sydenham. Warren Feeney noted the power of this spatial juxtaposition, and how inside the containers, one's attention "was captured and sustained until they stepped back outside on to the empty sites, each time confronted with the context in which this programme offered new possibilities for the experience of art."[52] In this sense, the shipping container's interior served as an industrial "white cube", allowing the work inside to perform without the distraction of the almost overbearing environment outside. However, with the adoption of such a ubiquitous symbol of post-quake Christchurch, recognition of the unadorned and subtly sign-posted containers as spaces in which to experience art was not guaranteed, rewarding investigation rather than occupying public spaces in the more immediate and immersed manner. *Measure the City with the Body* was not directly transformative of public space, nor did it connect in an explicit way to the specific surroundings (although the art inside was referential of the task of re-building a city), but served as an interesting middle-ground between exterior space and a contemplative interior setting.

[49] Gap Filler also set up a relocatable headquarters on Colombo Street in Sydenham in early 2012. The small shed was placed on a corner lot in front of a wall painting that read in blue, "The things which I have seen I now can see no more"; an apt sentiment for the role Gap Filler has played in the reimagining of empty spaces around the city. By the second half of 2012, the Gap Filler HQ had moved to more centrally located "The Commons", where the Crowne Plaza Hotel stood prior to its 2012 demolition. The presence of art spaces and galleries was also evident in other nearby inner-city suburbs, from the establishment of Dog Park in Waltham, to Chambers 241 on the cusp of the central city and Sydenham on Moorhouse Avenue, while Jonathan Smart temporarily utilized a space in artist Neil Dawson's Linwood studio before opening a new space in Addington.
[50] Form, which had moved from the damaged Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu on Worcester Boulevard, relocated permanently to Sydenham. The Physics Room staged its first exhibition at Sandyford Street, Sydenham in early March 2012, before returning to its Tuam Street space in December 2012.
[51] *Measure the city with the body* ran from 4 April to 19 May 2012.
(http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/gallery/2012/measurethecity/, accessed February 20, 2014)
[52] Warren Feeney, "Warren Feeney's Survey of 2012", January 16, 2013,
http://eyecontactsite.com/2013/01/warren-feeneys-survey-of#ixzz2IkKGn9hi, accessed January 21, 2013

Across Colombo Street, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu presented local artist Doc Ross' photographs of pre-quake Christchurch, shown on a continuous loop in the front window of the artist's studio. Entitled *Phantom City*, Ross's "immaculately crafted, richly-toned black and white photographs", taken over the fourteen years prior to the earthquakes, offered a range of new post-quake readings, providing memories of everyday encounters.[53] Ken Hall, a curator at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, asserted that the photographs, with their meaning altered, confronted "our sense of memory and attachment, and have become difficult to view."[54] The stark images subtly interjected haunting and contemplative reminders of the city's past into the street. If the images themselves were silent, the accompanying sounds of the surroundings, from passing footsteps to rumbling traffic, brought the photographs to life, reinforcing their documentation of moments enacted in the city's streets. Ross's photographs engaged more directly with public space, but were still staged inside a building, providing a separation between the work and the viewer, even it was only a pane of glass. While the examples of *Measure the City with the Body* and *Phantom City* illustrated the presence of art institutions in post-quake Sydenham, they also presented alternative approaches to exhibiting work in an attempt to engage with the altered public environment. Neither presentation was explicitly "public", but by utilizing shipping containers and shop windows respectively, the relationship between art and the city's new state was made evident. Both *Measure the City with the Body* and *Phantom City* illustrated that art could still be experienced in mediated states without being completely divested from the realities of the city outside. But while this was perhaps a reflection of art world preferences, Sydenham's walls have also served as more explicitly public sites of art, including the presence of the one of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's most notable post-quake works.

On a wall at the rear of a prominent vacant corner lot at the city-end of Colombo Street, a large mural, an early example of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's post-quake profile and re-imagined *Outer Spaces* programme, provided a notable public art presence in Sydenham. While the *Outer Spaces* programme existed pre-quake as an attempt to adorn the surrounding spaces of the gallery's physical home on Worcester Boulevard, with the building closed, the programme was reconfigured to extend a wider reach across the post-quake city. Wayne Youle's *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* (2011) **(Fig. 4.20)**, created in collaboration with the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Gap Filler, has been a visible and enduring symbol of the gallery's post-quake public presence, as well as the city's, and Sydenham's, recovery. Almost

[53] Ken Hall, "Doc Ross – Phantom City", in *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu,* B.168, Winter, June-August, 2012, p. 11
[54] Ibid.

immediately visible upon crossing the Colombo Street overpass and entering Sydenham, Youle's mural has provided both a specific connection to its location, but due to the close vicinity to the central city (one of the only *Outer Spaces* works outside of the CBD), also serves as a civic symbol for the wider post-quake city beyond Sydenham.

The mural depicts a massive shadow board, influenced by Youle's memories of his Grandfather's shed and evoking connections to New Zealand's "number 8 wire" mentality that has been a useful approach throughout the city's earthquake experience, from the construction of makeshift shelters, toilets and showers, to the temporary repair of broken homes. The dulled yellow background (a contrast to the ubiquitous neon yellow around the city) is filled with scores of black silhouettes, from a diamond ring to a doll's house, a chandelier and even a CCTV camera. Breaking the yellow and black colour scheme, an orange road cone sits at the right bottom corner, a ubiquitous post-quake symbol that referenced the surrounding landscape. Despite its significant size, the mural's "Do-It-Yourself" qualities provide a marked departure from the grandeur of much municipal public art. The title, inspired by the Groucho Marx mask also depicted on the wall, reflects the difficulty the artist had in finding things funny in the wake of the earthquakes, and the importance of rediscovering a sense of humour.[55] The artist himself explained the mural as being: "…for all those who lent their tools and their hands to all who needed help. Also to all those who lost something in the quakes, no matter what that something may have been. Don't lose your sense of humour and ability to smile."[56] Youle's empty shadow board operates on multiple levels. The silhouetted shapes representative of absent things, both those lost in the quakes, and objects necessarily lent out in the rebuild and recovery, both physical (a hammer and a hand saw) and psychological (a camera and a coffee pot representing memories and community respectively) contributions. Justin Paton praised the mural as a memorial, due to its willingness to leave things out: "It has to honour what's lost by evoking its absence, not by trying to bring it back. It has to make us do the remembering, rather than doing the remembering for us..."[57] In this act of remembering, the viewer is able to make personal connections to the missing objects, either as something lost or something borrowed out of need.

Despite the mural's ability to speak of the wider city's experience, perhaps the result of the Gallery's perceived civic responsibility, the specific location of *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* in Sydenham's commercial strip also provided an important influence for the artist. Youle's concept thoughtfully engages with the area's past, present and future. In an interview with the

[55] Uncredited, "Wayne Youle: I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour", in *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.172, Winter, May-August, 2013, p. 42
[56] Justin Paton, "Outer Spaces", in *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.167, Autumn, March-May, 2012, p. 28
[57] Paton, "Perimeter Notes: A Day Around the Red Zone", in *Bulletin,* B.167, p. 23

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu marking the mural's completion, Youle explained his connection to the work's physical location. For the artist, Sydenham had been a location of great utility in his work. Youle recounted the industrial setting and the businesses formerly housed on the site, from an engraver to a stone mason, as places where he often visited.[58] Youle described the influence of this relationship on his conception of the mural: "When I thought of Sydenham in terms of the artwork, I really wanted to relate it to the fact that all those craftsmen and little workers and little places that I used and the idea that something's now missing."[59] While this imbued the work with a local intimacy, the scale of the mural and its relationship with the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu ensured it would be understood in a wider context as a piece of public art for the greater city.

If the presence of The Physics Room and the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu in Sydenham did not signal an entrance into wider suburbia, a range of other contributors ensured that art in the streets was a prominent feature of post-quake suburban life, and in many cases tied directly to the experience of the communities in which their works were created. In Sumner, a local artist and gallerist played a significant role in the transformation of the most prominent physical markers of the earthquakes' impact upon the village, altering the perception of the post-quake landscape through the creation of a massive outdoor art gallery. Largely unscathed in September 2010, the village was significantly damaged in February 2011, when streets buckled and buildings fell, and most frighteningly, as Christopher Moore described, "rocks the size of houses" rained down from the surrounding cliffs that had long defined Sumner's picturesque natural environment.[60] The effects of the quake on Sumner's appearance were obvious and widespread. Broken houses and businesses were surrounded by the evidence and remaining threat of rock falls, and while the addition of hurricane fencing, shipping containers and road cones to the village's streets echoed many of the city's worst affected suburbs, the imposing and precarious natural environment provided a unique concern. The significantly altered environment was to prove challenging, as Sumner resident and journalist Amanda Cropp noted: "Change is inevitable, but when change that would ordinarily take decades is compressed into a matter of months, the upheaval is draining."[61] The February experience entrenched the fear that any significant aftershock could result in more, and potentially greater, damage. Shipping containers were installed along roadsides to protect homes, cars and people from the ongoing threat

[58] http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/film/artist-interviews/wayne-youle/, accessed January 15, 2013
[59] Ibid.
[60] Christopher Moore, "Silt and Mud", in *Earthquake, Christchurch, New Zealand 22 February 2011*, pp. 138-140
[61] Cropp, "My year of living warily", *Sunday Star Times*, p. C4

of rock fall from the cliff faces surrounding the village.[62] The containers became an unavoidable presence along the cliff face between Sumner and Redcliffs, notably along Sumner's Main Road and Wakefield Avenue. The impact on the previously picturesque setting was visually and psychologically imposing. While these containers served a functional purpose, in their industrial appearance they were also a constant reminder of the danger they attempted to stave off. Cropp reflected on the effects of the presence of the hundreds of containers piled two-high, on the perception of post-quake Sumner:

> They give the mistaken impression that our previously popular village is too dangerous to visit and local businesses are starved of customers. In fact the containers… have efficiently halted falling boulders. But it's a battle persuading outsiders they can still safely browse the gift shops, linger in the cafes, and walk the beach.[63]

In the two years that the containers were most prominent the impact of their presence was noticeable, with traffic dropping along Wakefield Avenue and Main Road in the two years following the September earthquake.[64]

Beginning in October 2011, the beachside containers that marked the main passage into Sumner village were progressively covered in large printed canvas reproductions of works by a selection of artists, many with a local connection. The result was the transformation of the sentinel-like boxes into the walls of an outdoor gallery.[65] The project was curated by Sumner artist and gallery owner Bryan L'Estrange, who raised funds and gained private sponsorship to facilitate the "open air" gallery. Without the prominent reputation of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, and not a forced relocation like the dispossessed Physics Room, the presence of the container gallery was entwined with the local art community, with the organiser's L'Estrange Gallery an entrenched institution in Sumner. The container gallery, in its private production and acknowledgement of commercial sponsorship, provided a different presence from graffiti and street art, a reality heightened by the reproduced images, somewhat distancing the artists from the process of their work becoming public. L'Estrange envisioned the project as a large, outdoor New Zealand art gallery, bringing together a variety of works by a wide range of local and national artists within a full public

[62] Shipping containers have had multiple identities around post-quake Christchurch; storage spaces, offices, protection from damaged buildings, and even retail spaces, most famously in Re:START Mall, but also as corner dairies.
[63] Cropp, "My year of living warily", *Sunday Star Times*, p. C4
[64] In late August/early September 2013, Sumner's shipping containers were reduced from 109 to 50. (Abbie Napier, "Rockfall threat now contained", *Christchurch Mail*, August 22, 2013, p. 13; Marc Greenhill, "Sumner containers shipping out", *The Press*, Saturday, September 7, 2013, p. A7)
[65] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., 2012, p. 196

view.[66] The container gallery was a constant work in progress, with works added over its life span.[67] While some works were created specifically to be reproduced for the project, others pre-dated the earthquakes, re-purposed and re-contextualised by their new setting and unavoidable associations. Although displaying no strict thematic cohesion, L'Estrange ensured works were suitable for public display, a requirement borne from walking the beach with his family and the looming presence of the containers.[68] The images varied in content, including references to post-quake nerves, such as Tony Cribb's *Sanctuary* (2011), which echoed the ritualistic responses people developed in the event of aftershocks, Cribb's cartoon elephant clasping it's trunk around a street lamp **(Fig. 4.21)**, to landscapes that connected to Sumner's seaside surroundings and the significant changes it has undergone, such as Simon Kaan's evocative image. Bethany Wenborn's *Tin Can Vase* (undated) **(Fig. 4.22)** provided a subtle suggestion of the broken state of the city and the "Do-It-Yourself" appropriation of items; a tin can repurposed as a make-shift vase, a smaller scale echo of the transformation of industrial shipping containers into an art gallery. The use of the canvas to cover the fronts of the containers served to totally recast their appearance, the ridged steel surface replaced by the appearance of giant stretched canvasses tightly hung along huge wall. The printed canvas also provided practical benefits. The canvas offered a more durable medium that was also portable, much like the containers themselves. Overlaying the canvasses avoided the difficulties of painting the ridged surface of the containers. Even if the undulating contours render containers undesirable for mural artists, their ubiquitous presence across the city has seen a number decorated, either as commissioned projects or as targets for guerrilla artists.[69] As a private initiative it was distinct from the public projects of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu which served the city's cultural identity, while its size, scope and design also rendered it different from many of the other less formally organised artistic interventions found across the city. But in its attempt to make Sumner more welcoming by engaging directly with the post-quake landscape and creating a distraction from the overbearing threat of the natural environment, the container gallery reflected the expressions of community evident across many examples of suburban art. While these projects might have reflected the entry and presence of certain art world institutions into the suburbs, a range of other interventions have been more grassroots and community-driven, often produced by those outside of the "art world".

[66] Interview with Bryan L'Estrange, August 2012

[67] While containers were removed from various locations, the stretch of containers where the gallery was located remained in place by mid-2015. Ashleigh Stewart, "Shipping containers to be removed from Sumner", http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/71145561/Shipping-containers-to-be-removed-from-Sumner, accessed, February 4, 2016

[68] Interview with L'Estrange, August 2012

[69] A range of decorations have adorned the city's numerous shipping containers **(Appendix 1: Figs. A3-A5)**.

If Youle's mural and the container gallery signified notable large scale examples of public art in the suburbs (while still engaging with specific communities), smaller and largely independent additions (at times anonymous, other times collective) also provided responses to the post-quake settings, frequently engaging with the varied post-quake issues concerning suburban communities. The port-side village of Lyttelton, the closest populated area to the epicentre of the February 2011 quake provides several examples of this varied presence of art. Already distanced from the larger city by the Port Hills, Lyttelton's community felt a keen sense of geographic and psychological isolation from the rest of the city following the February quake. The village's physical environment was badly damaged, with approximately a third of the buildings on London Street affected, impacting as many as fifty centrally located businesses, and resulting in the loss of many of its architectural landmarks.[70] If not for its unique natural landscape, framed by the Port Hills and the harbour, the main street would have been almost unrecognisable. While these losses were impactful, the open spaces of Lyttelton's streets, dotted with the physical scars that remained visible long after February 2011, provided an important site for the community's post-quake experience. In the days and weeks that followed the February earthquake, Lyttelton residents came together and made use of the streets despite the surrounding broken and shattered buildings. Free coffee served from a temporary outdoor café, impromptu open air school classes teaching song writing and banjo playing, and the staging of memorial services ensured the streets were active sites of communal activity.[71] Local musician Adam McGrath recounted that he had heard that local radio station Volcano Radio had instituted a "no sad song" policy and had placed "battery-powered radios on broken street corners so those non sad songs could keep playing for all the folks walking past, to find and hug and hold each other."[72] Amongst these activities, the surrounding environment was also adorned with an array of artistic additions that attempted to communicate ideas about the quakes' impact and the community experience, often echoing graffiti and street art's presence and techniques, from subtle placements in the landscape to the use of specific material forms.

Erected in November 2011, on the site of the demolished Harbour Light Theatre, University of Canterbury students, in conjunction with An Act of Art and Gap Filler, produced and installed a sign board in an attempt to offer "hope and support to the Lyttelton community after the Christchurch earthquakes."[73] The work's title, *Light Inspiration for Lyttelton* **(Fig. 4.23)**, further revealed the intention of the work. Holes drilled into the board spelled out the phrase: "It doesn't matter how

[70] Tamlyn Stewart, "Light at the end of the tunnel", *The Press*, Monday, June 3, 2013, p. A13
[71] Ibid.
[72] Bettina Evans, *The Shaken Heart – Earthquake stories from the heart of Lyttelton*, Christchurch, Self-published, 2012, p. 93
[73] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., 2012, p. 260

slowly you go, as long as you don't stop". While the text could be easily read by day, it was transformed at night, when green light backlit the board and gave the phrase a ghostly glowing appearance. This effect was further embellished by the work's placement in the empty lot where the Harbour Light theatre, a significant Lyttelton landmark, once stood. The glowing aura of the sign created the atmosphere of a science-fiction cemetery. Although such a comparison may have been unintentional, the context provided by the site rendered it unavoidable due to the loss of the theatre. While the object itself was visually interesting, the text provided an opportunity for a variety of potential readings. The message was created as a sign of support and encouragement for Lyttelton people rebuilding their lives, but it might also be read as a comment on the frustrating insurance and rebuilding decision making processes encountered by residents and business owners.[74] However, within either context, *Light Inspiration for Lyttelton* does not make its plea in a forceful voice, the combination of the subtle appearance and choice of phrase, present a willingness to continue, a stoic belief that progress will be made.

On the same plot of land as *Light Inspiration for Lyttelton*, three rigidly upright totemic bands, decorated in the primary colours of nautical flags, stretched upwards, as if grown from the soil of the empty lot. The work, entitled *Upon the Upland Road* **(Fig. 4.24)**, was conceived and installed by Trent Hiles on National Poetry Day in July 2011 with permission from the land owner. Disguised by the geometric designs of the flags, Hiles utilised the nautical alphabet to spell the last three lines of James K Baxter's poem *High Country Weather*:

Ride easy stranger

Surrender to the sky

Your heart of anger

The nautical flag alphabet masked immediate recognition of the verse for most, but also tied directly to Lyttelton's history as a port town and as such forged a specific relationship to place. While the text was not directly accessible to the land-locked layperson, once revealed, it seemed fitting to the air of

[74] In 2015, British artist Martin Creed was commissioned to produce a work on the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. The resulting neon light work, which declared "Everything is going to be alright" in large letters, was both defiant and ironic, providing multiple readings as well. Notably, the timing of Creed's work, five years after the September 2010 earthquake, allowed a more cynical reading of the artist's phrasing. However, *Light Inspiration for Lyttelton*, produced much closer to the February earthquake, might reflect the need for, and impact of, such statements in this more immediate post-quake period, when support networks were entirely necessary. (Charlie Gates, "British artist Martin Creed brings ironic message of hope to Christchurch", http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/72427405/british-artist-martin-creed-brings-ironic-message-of-hope-to-christchurch.html, accessed March 4, 2016)

frustration following the earthquakes, imploring the reader to surrender their anger.[75] The bands, with a "Do-It-Yourself" aesthetic and un-assumedly framed behind the hurricane fencing, suggested a post-quake approach distinct from large-scale public art.

These examples might not be considered "street art" in the more popular construction, but they illustrated a willingness to utilise post-quake suburban spaces in creative ways without the scale of more notable public art. Despite their sanctioned nature, the unassuming presence and modest forms and materials suggested a hand-crafted approach, and as such a stronger relationship to street art practices, especially within their expanding profile and the employment of independent public art as a more expansive concept. Amongst the numerous other examples of varied creative interventions, works with more explicit connections to graffiti and street art, while still expressing the concerns of suburban communities, were also evident, suggesting the popular awareness of these forms as meaningful approaches to public space.

An example of the sense of community in Lyttelton involved both the creation of symbolic objects to unite the people of the port village and the recognition of the affected built environment as a social space. Combining supportive gestures with an echo of a popular street art practice, small craft hearts became a prominent sight around Lyttelton in the weeks and months following the February earthquake, first worn by members of the community and then adorning the numerous hurricane fences dotting the streets. Growing from the very real need for people to come together, to meet, to talk, to share company and to find comfort with others, the *Lyttel Stitches* were part of a craft project started by members of community group Project Lyttelton in the days following the February earthquake. The *Lyttel Stitches* project saw the creation of badges in the shape of hearts cut from various fabrics and adorned with hand-stitched messages and symbols, an activity that invited

[75] In late June 2013, Hiles created a second work based on the nautical alphabet, this time on the Lyttelton Civic Square site as a transitional project funded by the Christchurch City Council. Titled *The Fifth Ship* **(Appendix 1: Fig. A6)** in reference to the importance of the arrival of the First Four Ships to Lyttelton (Hiles' great-great-grandfather, William Scotland, captained a ship to Lyttelton in 1876), this time Hiles used an original verse. While *Upon the Upland Road* employed thin flat bands, *The Fifth Ship*'s four curved and rounded beams were more sculptural, organically curved to reflect the West wind considered favourable for sailors. Drawing on Hiles' personal connection to the village, the poem touches upon Lyttelton's history and future: *Time falls stalls freezes/Harbour lights falter fade/Dust settles hopeless flee/New pilgrims see opportunity.* The prose evokes the experience of the earthquakes, and expresses the "endurance and commitment of those Lytteltonians who stayed after the earthquakes despite being faced with every reason to leave." (Abbie Napier, "Seventh piece tells salty yarn", *Christchurch Mail*, July 11, 2013, p. 9) As with *Upon the Upland Road*, the poem is not immediately clear to any viewer without knowledge of the nautical alphabet, and yet the suggested swaying forms and primary colours are still able to impart a sense of place and belonging. The new work provided a symbol of the progress made by Lyttelton in the years that have followed the February 2011 earthquake, a sense of growth and renewal that is not a return to a pre-quake state but an acknowledgement of the importance of the post-quake experience as an aspect of the community's enduring and evolving identity. (Uncredited, "Anchors Away", *The Press* (*GO Arts* supplement), Friday, July 12, 2013, p. 13)

communal participation. The concept encouraged people to come together and share an activity while expressing their worries and hopes in an informal setting, while also creating a physical symbol that could be shared amongst the community. Made by a wide range of the community, the hearts were not primarily art objects in a strict sense, but were instead a result of the need and desire to be busy and engaged and to share the post-quake experience. The physical act of making the hearts drew people in and allowed them to spend time with others, keeping their hands busy through the creation of a small, simple, yet touching and symbolically important gesture. The act of creation was as important as physically wearing the badges. The hearts were made from old bits of felt, cloth, woollen blankets, buttons and embroidery thread and wool. They were not slick and polished. Their appearance, with frayed edges, misshapen forms and crude stitching reflected their creation, not as mass-produced commodities, but as individual entities with unique frailties and distinct qualities. In this appearance they were much like the community that produced them. Many were adorned with messages of hope, remembrance and humour. While these were often simple, single word declarations such as "Love" and "Forever", others were more specific, such as "Kia Kaha London Street" (an acknowledgement of the significant impact upon the main street), an instruction to remember to "Breathe", and wittily, "Lyttelton – It's Our Fault", a tongue-in-cheek reference to Lyttelton's close vicinity to the epicentre of the quake. Hearts were gifted to a range of prominent visitors to the port, and while such exposure highlighted a sense of shared support and care, the true driving force of the hearts was always the people of Lyttelton who shared in the earthquake experience. As Bettina Evans, one of the organisers of the *Lyttel Stitches* project recounted, the hearts were primarily for the local residents walking past, many who preferred the company and relative safety of the streets over their damaged homes, for mothers with their children awaiting the school to re-open, and the people whose jobs were lost or suspended, and the people collecting clean water. [76] These figures also reflected the importance of open spaces in post-quake Lyttelton, where comfort was found in the streets and public spaces became sites of community interaction and engagement.

As badges, the *Lyttel Stitches* were a human concept. They served as an external realisation of the strength of heart necessary in the post-quake landscape. By being worn on the outside a sense of unified experience was obvious amongst the community, the hearts were signs of a shared experience, literally badges of membership of a club no-one would have wanted to join. Although the hearts were originally created as badges for people to wear, the *Lyttel Stitches* group eventually created larger hearts to adorn the fences that lined the centre of Lyttelton, brightening the streets that were marked by destruction, and extending the sense of collective care from the human community to the built

[76] Evans, 2012, p. 90

environment **(Figs. 4.25-4.27)**.[77] This sense of humanity was extended to the buildings and places that had also contributed to Lyttelton's identity; places that were no longer able to provide the communal experiences that had once contributed so much to life in the port. Affixing the hearts to the hurricane fencing suggested the reclamation of the quake-damaged spaces, positioning such spaces as a part of the community, a necessary site for the formation of collective identity and memory. The iconography of the heart served to humanize the encounter with the broken physical environment, both a reference to a human organ and a mirror of the smaller badges worn by members of the Lyttelton community. The video for Lyttelton band The Eastern's song *The Letting Go* featured shots of the damaged streets of the port township and the presence of *Lyttel Stitches* both on the chests of members of the community and on the hurricane fencing that framed the rubble and damaged buildings, highlighting the role of the small and large fabric hearts in the post-quake setting.[78] The addition of the craft hearts, not only a symbol of life, but also representative of the communal process of their actual creation, combatted the stark presence of the fences along London Street. In their hand-made nature, they served as a reminder that a community can honour and preserve its sense of history, and that although buildings may disappear or change, the experiences those places have facilitated would not be lost. While the *Lyttel Stitches* were most importantly a community gesture, their spirit of creation and dissemination, and importantly in their material qualities, connected with the inclusion of street craft as a specific element of the street art movement. Street craft includes the employment of a range of techniques and materials to create art in the streets, including, but not exclusive to, yarn, cotton and fabric.[79] Such approaches, often highlighting the harsh urban environment, are increasingly popular within street art's growing armoury. Kuittenen has suggested their increasing popularity is perhaps reflective of a "reaction to the prevailing image-making culture, with a return to the notion of hands as creative tools, rather than as means for pressing buttons and swiping screens. Street installations are usually built from humble materials, leaving the flashier stuff to the contemporary artists at their international art fairs."[80] Furthermore, Kuittenen reasons, street craft draws from previous generations' creativity within necessary tasks such as making clothes and home ware, while updating techniques such as knitting, sewing and crochet "by playing with proportion, context and subject, often underscored with a dynamic dose of contemporary feminism."[81]

---

[77] Ibid., p. 88
[78] The Eastern, *The Letting Go*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8bNzibtcVk, accessed March 20, 2013
[79] Street craft can also include light projections and installations, street sculptures produced from disparate materials such as paper or reclaimed wood and plastic, and guerrilla gardening, such as the cultivation of moss into silhouetted images applied to unexpected surfaces.
[80] Kuittenen, *Street Craft,* p. 10
[81] Ibid., p. 11

If the *Lyttel Stitches* evolved from the human body to the suburban surrounding *as* body, and as such suggested the street craft approach of street artists, another project drew from a specific technique within the broader realm of street craft in an attempt to alter perceptions of elements of the surrounding environment through transformation. In May 2012, Sumner resident Christine Reitze organised a "yarn bombing" of a container positioned on Nayland Street, covering the steel box in hundreds of colourful knitted panels stitched together to give the appearance of a comforting throw **(Fig. 4.28)**. The yarn bombing movement popularised by street artists has spread around the world, subverting the appearance of urban structures and challenging the hegemonic forces of cities.[82] The embellishment and concealment of urban elements in knitted fittings, from statues to lamp posts, parking meters to shopping trolleys **(Fig. 4.29)**, and famously, Arturo di Modica's *Charging Bull* (1989) statue on New York's Wall Street, which was completely covered in colourful crocheted camouflage in 2010 by artist Olek, has added a twist to the often masculine lexicon and perceptions of graffiti and street art.[83] Yet, as Waclawek notes of yarn bombers such as Olek and Magda Sayeg and her crew "Knitta Please":

> This accessible, textural and brightly coloured type of street art uses graffiti's lexicon to describe its actions, yet stands in contrast to its rebellious and stigmatized nature. In terms of function, however, the work of street knitters… emulates the same ambitions as those of many street artists: to engage with the public and create moments of inquiry in the urban sphere.[84]

Post-quake Christchurch's broken buildings and the pervasive industrial presence has ensured yarn bombing and the use of fabric and craft materials to adorn the often harsh environment, evident in the *Lyttel Stitches* as well as fabric flags, shapes and objects, as well as yarn bombings of lamp posts **(Fig. 4.30)**, that have contrasted with the steel and concrete, and have provided a sense of transformation.[85]

Reitze advertised for contributions to the *Container Love* project on Facebook and via posters around Sumner, and held knitting sessions to complete the more than eight hundred crocheted and knitted

---

[82] "Yarn Bombing" is also referred to as "Free-Knitting" and "Craftivism", highlighting the contentious ascription of terms to street art practices. Yarn bombing is notable for its adoption of the graffiti lexicon, despite its obvious differences.

[83] The Charging Bull itself was initially placed in front of the New York Stock Exchange without permission by the artist, the hefty bronze quickly removed before being placed nearby where it has become a symbol of the city and, to some degree, the Stock Exchange. (http://chargingbull.com/chargingbull.html, accessed May 6, 2015). Olek herself has refuted the term "yarn bombing" declaring: "I don't yarn bomb, I make art" (David Carrier and Joachim Pissarro, *Wild Art*, London/New York, Phaidon, 2013, p. 44)

[84] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 72

[85] A twist on the practice of yarn bombing was provided by the Gap Filler supported work *Knit Happens* by Jen McBride **(Appendix 1: Fig. A7)**. The work did not use yarn, but instead painted the surface of an exposed brick wall in the city centre with pink, blue and yellow droplets to give the effect of a loosely-weaved knit.

squares required to cover an entire container. As American yarn bomber Knitorious M.E.G. notes, knitting takes time, and as such "Yarn comes with baggage… The time it takes to knit or crochet the stuff demonstrates real intention and commitment to the piece."[86] In the case of *Container Love*, this time commitment, combined with the collaborative nature, imbued the work with a sense of community in its very creation. The quilted cover entirely transformed the container, leaving little sign of its original appearance, leaving it a large woollen block. The constituent squares that covered the container featured contributions from all over the world and expressed a wide range of hope and support for the embattled suburb and the city as a whole, adding a sense of warmth to an area all too aware of its susceptibility to danger and its need to unite and support each other.[87] While many squares were flat blocks of colour, others depicted abstract geometric designs, some added texture and contour. Some squares added a representational effect, depicting faces, flowers and love hearts, while others utilised text to impart messages of hope, love and comfort. There were also intricate designs, such as a phoenix rising from flames, a New Zealand flag, and a map of New Zealand with a heart placed next to Christchurch. The effect of all the squares stitched together and draped over the container was busy, allowing the viewer to hunt from square to square for information or take in the cumulative transformative effect. The overall effect of the container was visible from distance, while the inspection of the individual squares invited closer reflection like a message board. The *Container Love* project illustrated a more enveloping transformation than many smaller guerrilla yarn-bombing or street craft initiatives, highlighting the sanctioned and participatory nature of its creation. Yet even if the permissioned *Container Love* project lacked the transgressive qualities of other unsanctioned examples, the transformative effect made apparent the ability of street art to provide alternatives to the state of the physical (and ideological) environments we inhabit, an important quality in a city with reminders of the earthquake experience still evident. However, while yarn bombers often attempt to expose the hegemonic privilege of city spaces through concealment and transformation, *Container Love* was more about concealing the visible impact of the earthquakes, highlighting a different context provided by the post-quake setting.

While many examples attempted to transform or distract from the damaged built environment or provide encouragement and support to communities, the daily frustrations involved in recovering from the quakes were also a common inspiration for creative expressions. Indeed, like characters from Dylan's *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, many people took to the pavement to not just *think* about the Government, but to air anger and frustration. While often utilising a sense of humour, visual

[86] Kuittenen, *Street Craft*, p. 79
[87] Uncredited, "Needleworkers worldwide add colour to Sumner roadside container", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, May 5, 2012, p. A7

commentaries reflected the feelings of frustration evident in many suburbs, although often tinged with an acerbic sense of humour. In Lyttelton, a mix of playful mockery, cynicism and anger was evident in artistic interventions and transformations that countered the hope and memorialisation of the *Lyttel Stitches*, *Crux* and the other additions to London Street. These examples also notably made use of symbols of the earthquakes' impact, from broken houses, to functional objects that lined the streets, connecting the physical environment with the frustrating social experience in a manner more befitting street art than public art. Large concrete forms used to anchor temporary wall structures were a common feature of Lyttelton's steep streets. Created by pouring concrete into large sacks, these forms were known colloquially as "Brownlees", their rotund appearance compared to Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee, a popular target for those frustrated at the recovery process.[88] In 2011, a group of Lyttelton "Brownlees" were painted with a range of images that allegorically referred to the earthquake recovery experience, from three blind mice to an operatic fat lady singing to flying pigs, making a clear comment on the perceived ineptitude of authority, the never-ending wait on progress and the frustrations of unfulfilled discussion. The hand-painted images displayed a folk-like quality, their illustrative fairy tale style highlighting their allegorical content **(Fig. 4.31)**. The "Brownlees" were an appropriation of a functional physical object into a canvas for commentary around the frustrating recovery process and those in power.[89] The sense of humour evident in the painted "Brownlees" was echoed in another prominent sight in the Lyttelton landscape. Along Norwich Quay near Lyttelton's harbour front, a damaged building was transformed into a giant Christmas present, painted red and adorned with a large gold ribbon and bow apparently cut from custom wood. The "wrapped" house was accompanied with a gift tag that declared: "All I want 4 Christmas is an answer from EQC", an expression of the ongoing struggles around insurance and home repairs felt widely around the city. The building was yet another transformative intervention that almost wholly subverted the structure's form, but this time it made a pointed comment about the frustrations of insurance.

In the Avondale red zone, amongst emptying homes and signs of demolition, a suburban fence provided another pointed message of one home owner's displeasure in dealing with insurance. On a suburban fence peering across the Avon River at passing traffic, beamed the recognisable corporate logo of insurance company AMI, the black and yellow colours heightened by the white-washed background provided by the concrete fence. But while the logo remained almost instantly recognisable, there was something amiss about this version of a familiar element of post-quake life. In May 2012, Avondale resident Eric Leask painted the fence of his soon-to-be demolished home with

[88] The forms were created by concrete being poured into large sacks.
[89] By 2012, other Lyttelton "Brownlees" were stencilled with the phrase "GE FREE NZ" **(Appendix 1: Fig. A8)**.

the altered company logo, the smile of the yellow face turned upside down into a frown, a more apt reflection of Leask's frustrations with the company's Southern Response quake settlement arm **(Fig. 4.33)**. The visibility of Leask's creation was immediately more public (even though it was painted on private property) than a sharply worded letter or an irate phone call to a complaints department.[90] Leask's painting made use of the comparative visibility of his property in contrast to the many houses buried more deeply within the residential red zone. Leask's fence took on the role of billboard in its last days before demolition, turning a private boundary into a forum for public communication. Leask drew on the graphic simplicity and recognition of corporate branding to impart his message. But while the crisp, graphic AMI logo was a common element of post-quake Christchurch, a symbol of often frustrating insurance tribulations, Leask's version is hand-painted, lacking the commercial perfection of the official branding in advertising or letterheads.

Smiley, as it was dubbed by local media, was less concerned with an aesthetic quality than a clearly expressed message, even if that declaration was perhaps one of futility around the scenario Leask found himself. It is doubtful Leask would have considered himself a street artist (*Smiley* might be best considered another example of independent public art), but in his visual language, he, perhaps inadvertently, displayed the influence of street art. The playful use of the insurance logo echoed the practice of "subvertising", a technique popularly included within street art discourses. Subvertising, more specifically part of the wider activist movement culture jamming, involves the alteration of prominent billboards and advertising spaces, transforming corporate brands and logos, playing on their recognition and associated meanings, critiquing and subverting the commercial manipulation evident in public spaces in an act of interventionist objection to the corporate control of public space.[91] Culture jamming, as an activist movement goes back beyond the contemporary incarnations of street art, with Matt Soar noting a lineage that includes the Situationists, proto-Dadaists, and even the ancient, "Trans-historical" form of the "Trickster".[92] While culture jamming is not primarily aesthetic, as a visual intervention in public space, it is inevitable paralleled with street art. Lewisohn is careful to distinguish the political intentions of culture jamming and subvertising from the aesthetic concerns of street art, despite the difficulty in clearly delineating the two:

> Subvertising is a form of political messaging that at its purest isn't street art at all, but its own distinct genre. There are often crossovers, however: a street artist, for example, may subvert an advert and turn it into an artwork with a political message in exactly the same way as a subvertiser would… More than an art form, subvertising is a type of social activism. But as with everything that relates to counter

[90] Samantha McPherson, "Bulldozer gets rid of 'smiley'", *The Star*, Friday, August 24, 2012, p. 4
[91] Babington, *Space Invaders*, p. 33
[92] Matt Soar, "Culture Jamming, or Something Like It", in Steven Heller, and Véronique Vienne, eds*., Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility,* New York, Allworth Press, 2007, pp. 210-211

> culture, the lines are often blurred because of the variety and vast quantity of activity taking place. Some acts of subvertising may therefore have truly artistic credentials, but as a general rule, the over-arching motive and understanding of this activity is a political one.[93]

Lewisohn admits that what street artists and subvertisers share is that "they have to compete with the visual noise of the external world."[94] In this shared environment, street art and subvertising illustrate the ability to challenge the accepted experience of public space through unexpected alterations and transformations of sanctioned and official visual elements. As Waclawek explains, the ability of such interventions to alter the perception of urban (and suburban environments, directly disrupts the corporate and commercial authority of a city, and provides a way to respond to "those who have financial, and by extension visual, control over cityscapes", and importantly, "empower the public in their experience of their environment and challenge the status quo.[95]

Leask was appropriating corporate imagery in the manner that subvertisers amend advertising, however, his painting would not strictly be considered in the same way. While subvertising primarily attacks the sites of dissemination afforded to those with the means to plaster their messages over public spaces, such as billboards and advertising shells, Leask utilised a more accessible site; his own front fence, itself a symbol of suburban life and ownership of space. Therefore, Leask was not rupturing the actual advertising of the insurance company, but drawing on the recognition of their brand. Leask's use of his own property reflected the personal nature of his gesture; this was no swipe against the global injustices of insurance, nor a commentary on public space, but rather a response to the specific experience of one family, even if it reflected the experiences of other red zone residents. Yet when Leask and his wife moved out of their Avondale property, the fence from which Smiley greeted passing traffic was quickly demolished by a bulldozer. Tellingly, the rest of the property was left standing until the remaining demolition began.[96] The demolition suggested the perceived power of such a discourse in a public place.

Several months before *Smiley*'s creation, a more explicit example of culture jamming was planned in Phillipstown, an inner suburb of Christchurch, sharing its target with Leask's painting. In October 2011, street artist Thatcher had planned to physically alter the AMI sign adorning the city's major sports ground, which was named after the insurance company in a corporate sponsorship deal **(Fig. 4.34)**.[97]

---

[93] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 116
[94] Ibid.
[95] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 189
[96] McPherson, "Bulldozer gets rid of 'smiley'", 2012, p. 4
[97] The artist, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, declared the work to be a homage to Colin McCahon, in reference to the iconic artist's use of "I AM" and the insurance company's logo. (Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 84)

The artist intended to turn the large AMI "smile" on the face of the stadium's exterior upside-down. The work was intended to not only provide a comment on the apparent frustrations of AMI customers, but a personification of the broken stadium's state. While the gesture was never realised in its physical form, the planned project was documented and circulated in the book *Christchurch: The Transitional City Pt IV*, and despite the stadium being closed since the earthquake and facing an uncertain future, in its conception it potentially provided a more direct challenge to the corporate branding by turning the company's own advertising back on itself, rather than Leask's appropriation of the familiar image.[98]

While *Smiley* was a specific response to the home owner's dealings with his insurance company, a brightly coloured stencil in Sumner similarly played on corporate branding. But rather than expressing anger towards the injustices of a specific company by subverting a corporate identity, the Sumner work took a more generic approach to the wider city's plight by adopting a visual language that played on the ubiquitous presence of construction companies around the city. Sumner artist Jason Kelly's stencil of a construction worker stood atop a wobbling moulded orange jelly was a fitting reference for the post-quake city **(Fig. 4.35)**, Amanda Cropp suggesting it was almost an appropriate civic logo.[99] The stencil, located on a wall exposed by the demolition of a popular pizzeria on Wakefield Avenue, commented with tongue in cheek on both Christchurch's swampy origins, but also the difficulty of rebuilding as the city continually rumbled and shook. The fabricated "Jelly" was a play on the artist's name, a combination of his first and last names, which provided an artistic identity for the guerrilla work, but also a fitting reference to the state of the city. The stencil combined a range of elements from Kelly's commercial and studio work, from the crisp graphic style (Kelly trained as a sign writer) to the reference to "Jelly" gelatine crystals, a popular New Zealand icon that provided a sense of nostalgia, and was here reborn as a construction company. Kelly's use of an instantly accessible visual language can be viewed as a comment upon the pervasive nature of corporate branding in our physical environment.[100] However, it was made with a playful sense of humour rather than the more pointed attack of works such as *Smiley*. *Jelly* was not located in a specific or personal relationship to its message as in the case with *Smiley*, but in its public nature, it was able to create the unexpected moment of engagement that is a powerful element of street art. Occupying the middle of a blank concrete wall overlooking a gravelly empty lot, the stencil was clearly no grandiose project, no commissioned act of revitalisation. Instead *Jelly* was a guerrilla act that provided a humorous comment for those passing by, perhaps an illustration of the differing fortunes and paths of the two suburban locations, from the

[98] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 84
[99] Cropp, "My year of living warily", *Sunday Star Times,* p. C4
[100] Since the creation of the stencil, Kelly has produced the image commercially and the work has become something of a popular post-quake logo itself, sold as a print.

emptying red zone to the recovering Sumner village. While *Smiley* and *Jelly* both reference culture jamming and therefore street art practices, they also provide a range of contrasting aspects; their private and public natures, the real frustrations of Leask's fence painting and humorous commentary of the Sumner stencil, the folksy "Do-It-Yourself" style of the AMI logo and the crisp graphic quality of *Jelly*. These examples relay a range of ideas that represent the art produced in the post-quake suburbs, both dealing with the specifics of the post-quake experience but also often utilising familiar visual languages to engage an audience within the suburban surroundings. But if these examples, and those preceding, suggest more disparate approaches to suburban art, some suburbs provide examples of a wider and more cohesive embrace of art in public spaces, and specifically the presence of graffiti and street art as transformative additions. Paton's suburban shift may not have occurred, but in two suburbs in particular, art in the streets has become a strong aspect of their post-quake identities, even as years have passed.

Feel free to join in: Graffiti and street artists and suburban renewal in Sydenham and New Brighton

While graffiti and street art have been an evident influence upon a range of projects, they have also been more explicitly present across the post-quake suburbs, in both small interventions and larger projects, highlighting an adaptable nature and participatory element perhaps at odds with historically transgressive reputations. Both thoughtful guerrilla interventions and vibrant permissioned murals that have brightened and reactivated suburban walls, have suggested the ability of normally peripheral and largely anonymous graffiti and street artists to participate in suburban renewal. While not always providing overt post-quake references, unsanctioned street art has often invoked a relationship to the surrounding environment through potential readings. In Sydenham, a cat careening downhill on skis, and Sylvester Stallone and Al Pacino in full Rambo and Scarface gun-toting mode, were both stencilled above a Sydenham doorway at different times, notably signed by Syd and Fix-It respectively, the names providing immediate connections to the broken suburb **(Figs. 4.36, 4.37)**. On a broken brick wall across Colombo Street, a small stencil by New Zealand-born, Australian-based artist Zebidi depicted a swing-dancing couple **(Fig. 4.38)**, perhaps a nod to Gap-Filler's *Dance-O-Mat*, a portable dance floor with a washing machine re-jigged as a dock to play music, transforming street corners into discotheques. New Brighton Mall similarly saw a number of smaller unsanctioned and largely anonymous creative interventions, with commentary ranging from politically-conscious fly-posters (one drawing comparison to the box-office takings of the film *Sex and the City 2* with the issue

of global poverty) to pixelated video game characters, an oversized goldfish, and yellow parking bollards brought to life by Porta's addition of stencilled cyclopic eyes, the concrete pillars awakened like alien creatures surveying a new terrain. Repeated in both Sumner and New Brighton, stencils of a flock of birds swarmed across utility boxes providing a sense of tranquillity, while behind hurricane fencing in Sumner a collection of multi-coloured interlocking blocks suggested the popular 1980s video game *Tetris*, and perhaps a subtle comment on rebuilding the city and filling the empty gaps to piece everything back together **(Figs. 4.39-4.44)**.

However, this graffiti and street art presence has not only been evident in unsanctioned interventions, but also as part of a number of organised projects, most notably the production of murals and wall paintings. This sanctioned presence has in many cases illustrated the willingness of graffiti and street artists to contribute to the sense of community and recovery across post-quake suburban Christchurch. In particular, Sydenham and New Brighton embraced the presence of murals and wall paintings in the wake of the earthquakes. A number of works by graffiti and street artists cover various walls along Colombo Street, providing a sense of reactivation, and becoming an ongoing aspect of the area's identity.[101] Reports of the plight of Sydenham have often been accompanied by images of the murals colouring the walls of the area's retail district. With perhaps a lower profile, New Brighton's well-known, yet down-trodden mall, equally filled with signs of the earthquakes' impact, has been adorned with an evolving array of wall paintings across the changing physical setting, as a legacy of a defined community initiative to imbue the area with a creative point of difference.

While *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* was an example of the institutional presence of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, many of the other murals throughout Sydenham have reflected more independent endeavours, and notably, have been created by graffiti and street artists, perhaps providing the most condensed presence of graffiti and street in Christchurch's suburbs (also further indicative of its "inner" suburb status). At the opposite end of Colombo Street from Youle's mural, boldly painted on the wall of a local business at the fringe of a large empty lot slowly becoming overgrown with wildflowers and facing the residential area of Sydenham across Brougham Street, a colourful graffiti production became another symbol of the city's, and Sydenham's recovery. Produced with the permission of the building owner, the *Phoenix Wall* proved a popular addition, appearing in newspaper and television stories as a bright symbol of

[101] Georgina Stylianou, "Sydenham rebuild stalemate may end", *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A5; Georgina Stylianou, "Suburb stuck at ground zero – pleas to end stalemate over Colombo St future", http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/southern/9732663/Suburb-stuck-at-ground-zero, accessed February 26, 2014

the recovery of Christchurch's battered streets.[102] A black silhouette of licking flames against a yellow background from which the fire-bird lifts both echoed the colour scheme of the business on whose building the mural was painted, but also created a shared visual element with Youle's mural, despite the obvious stylistic and conceptual differences.[103]

Produced by local artists Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes in August 2011, the mural depicts a proud flame-coloured phoenix bird rising into flight, its wings outspread, framing the stylised and detailed graffiti names of the artists below **(Fig. 4.45)**. The overt symbolism of the phoenix bird reinforced in a shiny circular badge in the middle of the design, declaring over a silhouette of a city skyline, that Christchurch was "destined to rise".[104] While Youle's mural was painted by a team of artists working to specifications, the *Phoenix Wall* was an independent production that highlighted the stylistic and technical flourishes of the three collaborating artists in an effort to rejuvenate the Sydenham area with an uplifting addition.[105] The overt symbolism of the phoenix bird is contrasted with the associations of graffiti art as an often maligned visual language, even when produced with permission. The "pieces", which Freak describes as the "bones" of graffiti (asserting that they are "essential to me to keep my roots"[106]), ensured recognition of the artists' backgrounds, juxtaposing the earthquake reference with the declaration of identity and style that is central to graffiti culture. The work therefore speaks in an easily accessible symbolic vocabulary, but also in the internalised vernacular of graffiti writing.[107] Originally the mural's graffiti pieces were painted in stone grey, echoing the heritage buildings that had suffered damage in the earthquakes. However, the graffiti writing also apparently proved contentious. The mural was vandalised with grey paint, over the graffiti artists' names rather than the image of the phoenix, perhaps indicative of specific response to the presence of graffiti rather than the mural's overall appearance and sentiment.[108] With graffiti often a by-word for vandalism, the act added a certain level of irony, but seemingly reflected a common attitude towards graffiti of all types. As Freak reflected, "no matter what or how I paint they will never like graffiti and will always have the perception that it's not art", however, he notes further, he is not fazed by such responses, or else he would have "given this up a long time ago."[109] After being defaced,

[102] The mural is featured on the inside cover of *A City Recovers*, (Auckland, Random House, 2013)
[103] It is perhaps notable that the *Phoenix Wall* was painted several months before Youle's mural.
[104] Freak, Ikarus and Yikes are members of the graffiti crew DTR, which can stand for multiple meanings, including 'Destined To Rise'.
[105] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[106] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[107] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[108] The targeting of the graffiti pieces could reflect a dislike of graffiti on the part of the assailant or a "crossing out" of the artists' names, a sign of disrespect within the competitive world of graffiti writing. However, the use of grey paint reminiscent of that used in graffiti removal, rather than spray paint, and the standing of the three artists within the graffiti community would suggest the former is more likely, even if unproven.
[109] Interview with artist, May, 2012

the mural was quickly re-painted (and coated in anti-graffiti paint) by the artists and has remained largely untouched.[110] The work's appearance was altered when it was re-painted, with bright blue flames licking upwards and the "pieces" reborn in fiery reds, yellows and oranges **(Fig. 4.46)**. The reference to grey stone buildings now gone and replaced by more dynamic colours and forms in keeping with the theme of fire and rebirth symbolised by the phoenix bird, perhaps reflecting the changes the city had already undergone.

While *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* and the *Phoenix Wall* have symbolically bookended Colombo Street, representing different approaches to the presence of mural art in Sydenham, there have been numerous other examples along Colombo Street, illuminating the area as a vibrant location for wall art. Retail store Embassy relocated from the central city into a Colombo Street building bordered by a large empty lot that illuminated the exterior wall of the store's new home. Beginning in mid-2012, Freak, Ikarus and Yikes and an array of other artists, including local veteran Lurq, were commissioned to paint the store's large exterior wall, in part, to install the store's identity upon their new location. The wall was re-painted several times by the artists, suggesting a constant sense of regeneration **(Figs. 4.47)**. The productions drew together the artists' various interests and individual styles, avoiding reference to the earthquake's effects, instead creating a jostling scene of graffiti art and highlighting the technical abilities of the artists in their aerosol medium, from a life-like cherub statue, to cartoon characters and the writers' graffiti monikers in signature styles. In one incarnation images were sectioned into rectangular frames against the black wall, giving the appearance of comic book panels **(Fig. 4.48)**. In each version the wall teemed with life and colour, figures ready to jump from the wall and populate the empty space in front, like a gathering that threatens to spill into the street at any moment. While the busy compositions may have seemed crowded and confusing to a viewer unfamiliar with such forms, they were fitting for graffiti art murals, an outcome of the collaborative process and desire to highlight a range of styles and abilities. Although technically a commercial work that aimed to increase the store's visibility, the freedom afforded to the artists also heightened graffiti and street art's presence in the area, providing another highly visible forum for these artists to gain exposure and recognition as contributors to a developing identity.

Further walls along Colombo Street have also been adorned with murals of various sizes, including works by Richard "Popx" Baker (an expatriate Englishman who was part of the early wave of United

[110] The incident even gained national publicity, being featured on TV3's *Campbell Live*. ("Christchurch graffiti a public art gallery", http://www.3news.co.nz/Christchurch-graffiti-a-public-art-gallery/tabid/817/articleID/264829/Default.aspx, accessed January 21, 2013)

Kingdom graffiti writers) at each end in 2012 **(Fig. 4.49)**, and several additional murals by the DTR crew. The Embassy wall has regularly been repainted, including in a cosmic-themed production in 2014 by the DTR artists for the *First Thursdays* event, which combined arts programmes with various craft markets, and again in 2015 by the travelling graffiti crew TMD (as part of a tour supported by international paint manufacturers Ironlak), reflecting a willingness to accept the ephemerality of outdoor work, a legacy of a background in unsanctioned production.[111] Urban artists accept the temporary nature of their work and as such are able to reconcile loss without the need to reproduce the work in the same way; willing to grasp the opportunity to produce a fresh work whenever the chance arises. In late 2013, works created as part of *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* by some of New Zealand and Australia's most renowned graffiti and street artists further established the prominent place of urban art in the area, and included a spread into the suburb's industrial enclave outside of Colombo Street (which forms a focus of a following chapter). Since then, additional works have continued to appear, by both local and visiting artists. But if these somewhat disparate murals have represented the emergence of Sydenham as a continued destination for these forms of art, and as such a further indication of its "inner" location, to the east of the city, New Brighton provides an example of a more concentrated community-minded project that aimed to transform the suburb and installed an enduring presence of murals and wall art.

In a scene from Gerard Smyth's *When a City Falls*, the sun shines as a brass band plays and people collect food and supplies from a local school hall in New Brighton. The scene perhaps acknowledges the difficulties the seaside community faced, but also suggested a willingness to pick each other up and carry on.[112] However, even as the suburb regained a sense of normality, the impact on the physical environment was clear and exaggerated, with damaged buildings left empty, and an increasing number of vacant lots exposed as buildings were demolished. The impact of the quakes was an additional blight on an area that had faced a concerted period of decline after being one of the busiest villages in the city, when the now-dilapidated mall had at one time been the sole Saturday trading location in Christchurch. If the earthquakes had exacerbated the downtrodden appearance of the mall, which had become accompanied by the appearance of unsanctioned graffiti and more disparate examples of street art, which many viewed as unwanted intrusions and symbols of the loss of control, it also presented an opportunity to recreate the physical surroundings. But rather than rebuilding, which, as in many areas of the city, would take much longer, it was the use of the many exposed walls and surfaces as canvasses and spaces for the community to express hope, humour, and

[111] Although the local artists were also included in the 2015 re-painting.
[112] *When a City Falls,* dir. Gerard Smyth, Frank Film in association with NZ Film Commission, NZ On Air, 2012

creativity, which would occur in an expansive attempt to reclaim the mall and surrounding area as a vibrant setting.

Towards the end of 2012, after several months of planning and preparation, *Mural Madness*, organised by local resident Sue Davidson with help from a small group of supporters, attempted to adorn New Brighton's walls with murals of all sizes by a range of artists. The event's aim was to paint as many walls as possible around New Brighton to transform the village, as Davidson explained: "Brighton's talented artistic community will be celebrated. Murals will appear everywhere, beautifying the area, giving Brighton a point of difference and making her a venue!"[113] Murals and smaller works occupied entire buildings and small surfaces, from visible locations to more secluded spaces. Although intended to take place over the month of November as a concentrated community event that hoped to engage with an inquisitive audience, murals started to populate walls and transform New Brighton in the preceding and following months. Interested artists came forward to take part, if not as official participants, then through an informal association or as a by-product of a growing recognition as a site for murals and wall painting, imbuing *Mural Madness* with a wider sense of purpose than its intended staging as a defined event. Notable among these early contributors were Auckland artist Cinzah Seekayem, who painted a blissful character with a flowing feather adornment on an exposed brick wall over one night as he passed through Christchurch while filming the street art documentary *Dregs* **(Figs. 4.50)**, and Wellington's Drypnz, who painted three works in his distinctive figurative abstraction around the mall while on a brief trip to the city **(Fig. 4.51, 4.52)**.

When the event was officially staged in November of 2012, there was a sense of activity around the mall and surrounding streets. While a number of artists were given individual spaces, some were paired or grouped together, while other walls explored even wider collaboration and participation. On a massive car park wall, Richard "Popx" Baker co-ordinated a communal "bubble wall", which invited participation from any willing contributors **(Fig. 4.53)**. A greyscale stencil of a young girl blowing bubbles by Christchurch artist Koti "Selekt" Puru, who was originally paired with Baker to produce a work for the wall, formed the centre piece, the youngster spreading the soapy spheres up and across the wall. The bubbles were filled by anyone willing to wield a brush or spray can, from visiting graffiti artists to young children. The wall was then outlined with the word "LOVE", which was filled with a blue sky, in an attempt to draw the composition together and perhaps provide a unifying theme, while also drawing on a recurring aspect of Baker's work. The effect was somewhat chaotic, with a mixture of colour, words and characters, from graffiti names and popular culture references (such as video game characters), to a depiction of the nearby pier, illustrating the mix of contributors and their

[113] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 118

interests. The nature of the mural's creation was suggested in the busy composition. The wall's conception allowed everyone a voice, the final appearance of the wall impossible to predict. The wall grew organically as contributors added their ideas, staking a part in the community as a result of adding a bubble. In some respects, the wall echoed popular graffiti and street art sites, where layers upon layers of voices jostle for space. Yet unlike the competitive nature of unsanctioned art building upon itself, here each bubble was afforded its own space as a part of a wider composition, respectful and inclusive, something of a microcosm of the intentions of the *Mural Madness* event itself.[114]

The array of works realised as part of *Mural Madness* ranged from small to large, colourful to monotone, from reductive designs to intricate details and complicated compositions. This range was indicative of the focus on participation rather than a selective curatorship or any particular thematic current. The mall was inundated with characters, faces, landscapes, graffiti writing and geometric patterns often displaying the influence and presence of graffiti and street art. Rather than a unified approach, *Mural Madness* celebrated variety. While artists were given relative freedom, many submitted concepts, and a level of suitability based on the community-centric approach of the event was required. While some works served to adorn the buildings of functioning businesses, such as Drypnz's cyclist in the doorway of a bicycle repair store, or local artist Porta's grey toned stencil work covering the entire front of a furnishings store, and as such served a purpose of embellishing the businesses' presence, others occupied spaces that no longer served any active purpose, making new use of spaces earmarked for demolition. Works ranged in style and size, from large playful creatures such as Joseph Descamps' huge, goofy, buck-toothed monster leaping out from a wall on a quiet street as if attempting to surprise passers-by, colourful graffiti works and subtle figurative works **(Figs. 4.54-4.59)**. In the "Creative Quarter", a large vacant lot reclaimed by community action group Re:New Brighton for community-focussed projects, murals illustrated the spectrum of content across the mall. The space was filled with politically-themed images, a collaborative piece between a local poet and artist, and notably, a large abstracted figure, bursting in splintering, patterned blocks of colour, declaring New Brighton as "such a lovely place bro!", the image eventually adopted as an unofficial logo for the area and printed on t-shirts **(Figs. 4.60-4.62)**.[115] The Creative Quarter became a space where new additions consistently appeared, providing a sense of evolving energy, even as the Re:New Brighton project slowly faded and the vacant lot was emptied and the lot was put up for sale. The

[114] Two more collaborative walls have been created in New Brighton since the original "Bubble" wall, led by Baker and encouraging community participation **(Appendix 1: Fig. A9)**.

[115] The Creative Quarter also included a series of black and white photographs of past and present students of the soon-to-close Central New Brighton School, a comment on the future of the school as a result of decisions made by the Ministry of Education **(Appendix 1: Fig. A10)**. The monotone portraits were created as part of the global *Inside/Out* project conceived and facilitated by French artist JR, in which participants could upload images and receive printed versions to paste up in public locations.

murals remained a defining part of the space's appearance, divesting it from a sense of emptiness where a building *used to be*. *Mural Madness* was designed as a celebration. It was an inclusive community event rather than a critique of the surrounding environment or the post-quake experience, although some work inevitably revealed their post-quake existence; a large wall piece on a hostel by JRIBL depicted cartoon-styled rebuild workers in a condensed depiction of the city **(Fig. 4.63)**. An array of works decorated the dilapidated McCormack's Tavern building, including a mosaic polar bear by Mark Catley and a thick black linear face over a washed background by Chilean artist Fisura **(Figs. 4.64-4.66)**. These works served to reclaim and reactivate the exterior of the empty building, even if only for the short time prior to its eventual demise in 2013.

Although *Mural Madness* was conceived as a participatory community project to represent and celebrate the creative and artistic community in and around New Brighton, it expanded beyond local residents, as people from all corners of the city and even further afield responded to the open invitation to contribute. The New Brighton community was represented by diverse participants, from children to adults, painters to poets, self-professed "creatives" to those who felt compelled to contribute despite limited experience. The inclusive nature of the event was perhaps represented by a group of visually impaired students who painted a group of planters with superhero figures. Participants also came from further afield, reflecting the open nature of the event. But while the event aimed at engaging New Brighton's creative community, it also welcomed the city's wider involvement, including the graffiti and street art community, both local and from further afield. Artists from all over wider Christchurch responded to the open invitation to participate, as informal networks caught and spread word of the event. A cosmopolitan element was also evident with the participation of artists from France, Chile, and Argentina, many staying in New Brighton when *Mural Madness* was staged. While not conceived as a "street art" event in the style of the popular festivals staged around the world (and eventually in Christchurch), graffiti and street artists were significant, willing and positive contributors. In many cases artists were united in a shared graffiti or street art background. Alongside this influence, which in itself reflected the variety of contemporary graffiti and street art practices, artists with a background in these fields also illustrated an ability to work efficiently, to tackle an array of surfaces and spaces, and a recognition of the inevitably fleeting nature of public wall painting. The "Quad", as it was dubbed, an enclosed, unused car park at the rear of a collection of dilapidated, empty buildings, became a site of free expression, almost taking on the appearance of Melbourne's famed laneways, albeit within a much more condensed area. Initially adorned with two large murals by graffiti crews DTR and SLK **(Figs. 4.67, 4.68)**, produced as backdrops for a concert staged in the area in mid-2012, the area soon became filled with an increasing number of new paintings. Artists contributed to the space throughout late 2012 and into 2013, giving the Quad an evolving nature that

contrasted with other sites around the mall. The walls were continuously adorned until the buildings, formerly a chemist and small travel agency, were demolished in mid-2013. The Quad essentially acted as a free-for-all, with artists contributing as they wished. The resulting works were of all sizes, from small anonymous stencils of insects, to Teeth's totem pole of creatures with gnashed teeth and large horns, Fisura's black and white fantastical deep sea creature, anonymous political commentary and traditional graffiti pieces **(Figs. 4.69-4.72)**. The result was less collaborative and differed from unified mural works, instead it was more cumulative and street-like in appearance. The space gave an air of authenticity to the presence of graffiti and street art, allowing artists to contribute in a less organised manner with a freedom of expression, harking back to the presence of unsanctioned graffiti and street art in the mall, although here confined to a more defined space.

While *Mural Madness* has not become an annual occurrence, largely due to the inability to secure ongoing funding and necessary time commitments, the impact of the event lingers in the remaining works, as well as new works that have appeared **(Fig. 4.73)**, either as a continuation of the project, or as reflections of the acceptance of murals as a part of a community identity. While a number of murals created during *Mural Madness*' original staging remain, many more have disappeared as their supporting structures have been torn down, highlighting the ephemeral nature of mural painting as a form of public art dependent on its site of production rather than a material autonomy, entangling their existence with their immediate environment. New Brighton's use of muralism as a part of a community-focussed attempt to rejuvenate the suburb and create a new element of identity in the wake of the earthquakes and pre-existing decline presents an interesting example to consider in light of Christchurch's wider experience, and resonates with both Sydenham's prominent murals, as well as the various murals located throughout the central city, and particularly those produced for the *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* street art festivals.

Conclusion: Shifted suburbs

Across post-quake Christchurch's most affected suburbs, from the emptying residential red zone to areas recovering a sense of a new normality despite the significant impact and physical and social changes, art in the streets has been varied and able to engage with a range of issues. The diverse participants, from graffiti writers exploring the empty red zone houses, to "Do-It-Yourself" fence painters, and almost everything in between, has reflected the expanding acceptance of suburbia as a site for visual additions and interventions. While Paton's suggestion of a post-quake suburban shift may not have eventuated in the form of an enduring institutional presence, art, as well as less

developed forms of visual public discourses, have most assuredly become a more prominent aspect of many of these suburbs. The immediate experience of life in the suburbs ensured many communities and individuals took to the streets to share the experience and to register the changes around them, and the transformation of these sites through the addition of art that either beautified desolate buildings, or encouraged the consideration of change and loss in subtle, specific and even material ways, has been a marked feature. However, over time, art has been able to perform a range of other tasks within these suburban settings.

Within this revised approach to public (and private) space, graffiti and street art have had a notable influence. From guerrilla interventions to participatory projects, including street artists whose practice has evolved into more conceptual approaches, such as Ian Strange, and those who would defer from the title of "graffiti" or "street" artist, but are undeniably influenced by the forms, themes and techniques of these artists, such as the *Container Love* project's use of yarn bombing. The suburbs have also provided a complicated discourse surrounding the distinction of public and private space, from the adornment of suburban homes, both those occupied and those in the process of being vacated and ultimately destroyed, by both owners and invading artists, some invited, others not. The boundaries of public and private have in many cases been blurred in these areas, at first as a result of the earthquakes and then by political decisions, enabling a consideration of homes as spaces intimately connected with memory and lived experience, but also as physical structures that can be commandeered as forums for art. But if suburban homes have provided a unique forum for expression in Christchurch's post-quake landscape, the communal spaces of suburbia have also been important sites of art and specifically of the evolving and expanding roles of graffiti, street and independent public artists. While the privacy of home has been re-established to some degree as repairs have been made, as neighbourhoods have been either broken down or stabilised, and as the more immediate post-quake routines have been replaced with a sense of returned normality, many suburban communal areas still remain visibly impacted by the physical damage and legacy of the quakes. In sites such as New Brighton and Sydenham, the vacant lots and empty buildings of the retail areas have been embraced as hosts for the emergence of graffiti and street art murals and wall paintings as transformative elements of rejuvenation and post-quake identity. Both settings have seen the continued presence and addition of work by artists both from within the local community and further afield. While New Brighton's acceptance of these forms of public art were perhaps connected to a singular event that sparked continued participation by an expanding field of contributors, Sydenham's array of murals has been part of a more widespread and disparate roster of events, including the staging of festivals such as *Rise* and *From the Ground Up*, which will form a more central focus of the following chapters.

While the immediacy of the suburban experience has ensured a wide variety of examples, from Gap Filler and the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's support of Youle's *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* in Sydenham, to the communal craft additions to Lyttelton's broken London Street produced by members of the community looking to both busy their hands and to extend a sense of care to their surrounding environment, the following chapter shifts from the neighbourhoods of suburbia to the central city and a more defined and traditional construction of graffiti and street art as urban interventions, even if Christchurch's damaged inner city shared few of the expectations of urbanity. However, it is perhaps suburban Christchurch where the shifting interpretations of the presence of art and visual expressions in public spaces may have most deeply emerged as a unique element of the post-disaster city, a development that is complicated by the recovery of these areas and their deeply held notions of privacy and community.

Figures:

Figure 4.1: Vacant house, Bexley (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.2: Ian Strange, *Final Act*, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, Canterbury Museum, 2013-2014

Figure 4.3: Ian Strange, *Final Act*, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum 2014.33.1)

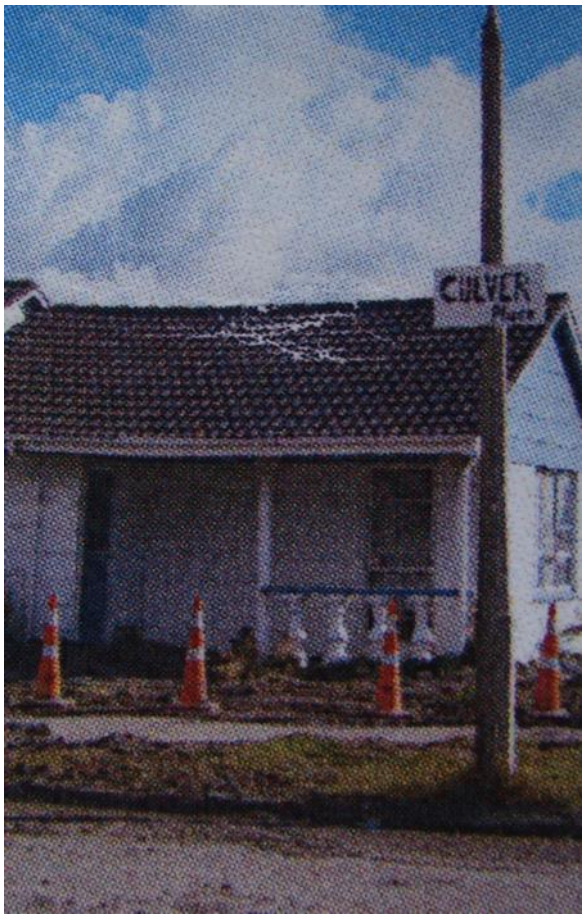

Figure 4.4: Hand painted street sign, Avondale (photo May 2012)

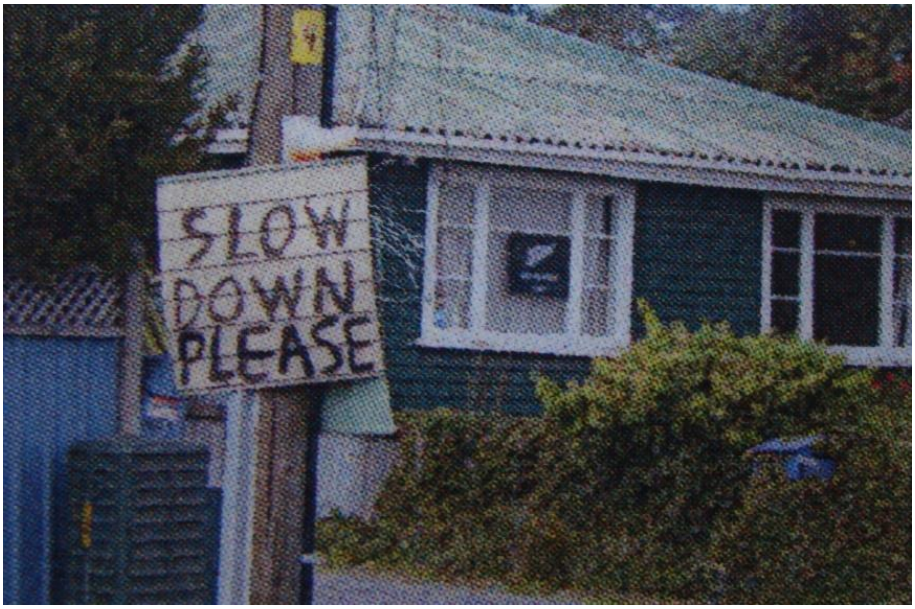

Figure 4.5: Hand painted sign, "Please Slow Down", New Brighton (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.6: Message on a vacant house, "Farewell Ole Friend, R.I.P, 1986-2012", Bexley (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.7: Message on a vacant house, "Camera Watching You!", Bexley (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.8: Painted message, "We R Living Here", Bexley (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.9: Unknown artist, “Bexley Creatures”, Bexley (photo May 2012)

Figure 4.10: Joter, vacant lot, Burwood (photo February 2013)

Figure 4.11: ATW, vacant house, New Brighton (photo July 2013)

Figure 4.12: ROAM, vacant house, Avondale (photo April 2013)

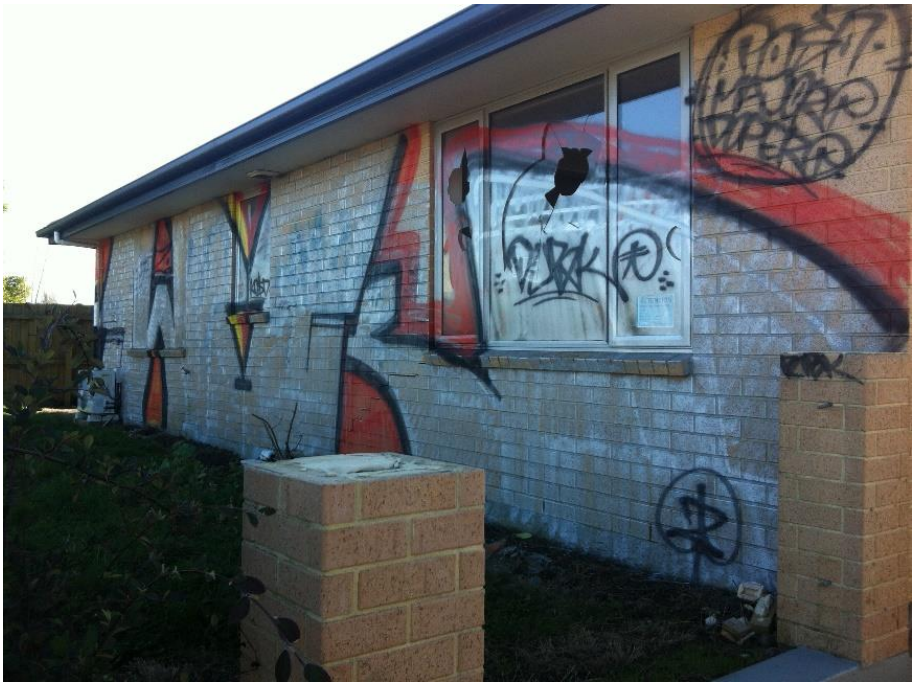

Figure 4.13: WK, vacant house, New Brighton (photo July 2013)

Figure 4.14: JF, vacant house, Wainoni (photo February 2014)

Figure 4.15: DTR Crew (Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus, and Jacob Yikes), "Graffiti House", St Albans (photo August 2014)

Figure 4.16: HIM, "I remember when the KAZBAH was over there", North New Brighton (photo February 2012)

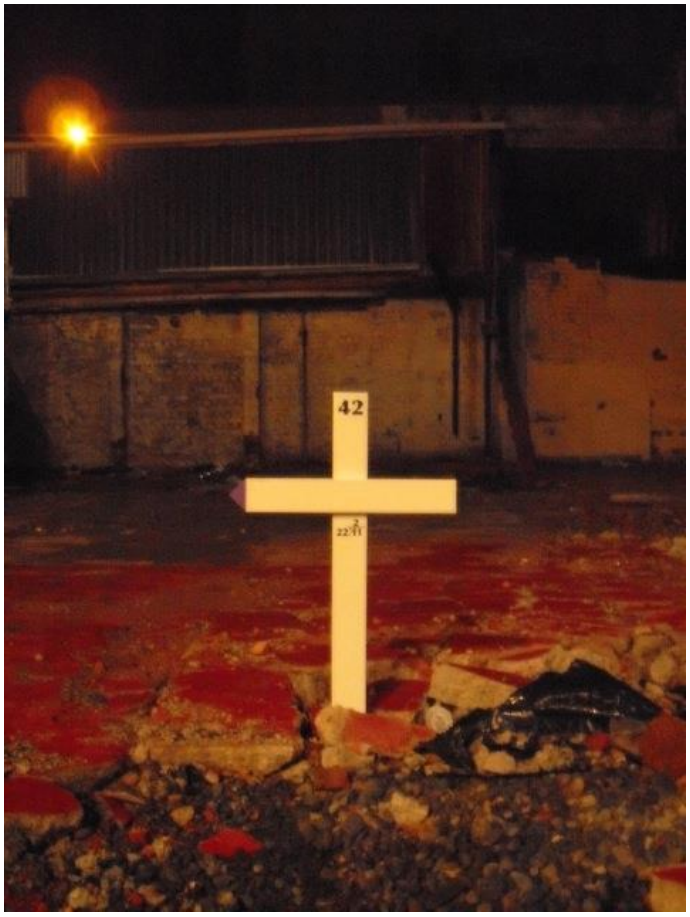

Figure 4.17: Delta, *Crux*, Lyttelton, 2011 (photo credit: Trent Hiles)

Figure 4.18: Delta, *Crux*, 2011, Lyttelton (photo credit: Michael Davies, Canterbury Museum, 2013.17.57)

Figure 4.19: *Measure the City with the Body*, an exhibition by The Physics Room, April-May 2012, Sydenham (photo 2012)

Figure 4.20: Wayne Youle, *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour*, 2012 Colombo Street, Sydenham, (photo March 2012)

Figure 4.21: Tony Cribb, *Sanctuary*, Container Gallery, Sumner (photo May 2012)

Figure 4.22: Bethany Wenborn, *Tin Can Vase*, Container Gallery, Sumner (photo May 2012)

Figure 4.23: Canterbury University students with Trent Hiles, *Light Inspiration for Lyttelton*, 2011, Lyttelton (photo April 2012)

Figure 4.24: Trent Hiles, *Upon the Upland Road*, 2011, Lyttelton (photo April 2012)

Figure 4.25: *Lyttel Stitches* hearts, Lyttelton (photo April 2012)

Figure 4.26: *Lyttel Stitches* heart, "Farewell the Volcano", 2011, Lyttelton (photo credit: Michael Davies, Canterbury Museum, 2013.17.59)

Figure 4.27: *Lyttel Stitches* heart, "Kia Kaha London Street", 2011, Lyttelton (photo credit: Michael Davies, Canterbury Museum, 2013.17.39)

Figure 4.28: Christine Reitze and various contributors, *Container Love*, 2012, Sumner (photo May 2012)

Figure 4.29: Unidentified artist, yarn bombed shopping trolley, New York (photo December 2011)

Figure 4.30: Unidentified artist, yarn bombed lamp post, Hereford Street, central city (photo August 2014)

Figure 4.31: Unidentified artist, "All I want for Xmas is an answer from EQC", Lyttelton (photo April 2012)

Figure 4.32: Unidentified artist, "Brownlees", Lyttelton (photo credit: Emilie Sitzia)

Figure 4.33: Eric Leask, *Smiley*, 2012, Avondale (photo August 2012)

Figure 4.34: Thatcher, *I AM*, 2011 (photo credit: Trent Hiles)

Figure 4.35: Jason Kelly, *Jelly*, 2012, Sumner, (photo May 2012)

Figure 4.36: Fixit, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo February 2012)

Figure 4.37: Syd, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

Figure 4.38: Zebidi, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo October 2013)

Figure 4.39: Unidentified artist, "The Three Amigos", New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.40: Unidentified artist, New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.41: Unidentified artist, New Brighton (photo December 2013)

Figure 4.42: Unidentified artist, New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.43: Porta, New Brighton (photo October 2012)

Figure 4.44: Unidentified artist, Sumner (photo April 2013)

Figure 4.45: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes, *Phoenix Wall*, 2011 Sydenham, (photo February 2012)

Figure 4.46: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes, *Phoenix Wall*, repainted in 2012, Sydenham (photo 2012)

Figure 4.47: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes, *Embassy Wall*, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo April 2012)

Figure 4.48: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus, Jacob Yikes and contributing artists, *Embassy Wall*, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2013)

Figure 4.49: Richard “Popx” Baker, “LOVE”, 2012, Colombo Street, Sydenham, (photo February 2012)

Figure 4.50: Cinzah Seekayem, 2012, New Brighton, (photo August 2012)

Figure 4.51: Drypnz, 2012, New Brighton (photo September 2012)

Figure 4.52: Drypnz, 2012, New Brighton (photo September 2012)

Figure 4.53: Richard "Popx" Baker, Koti "Selekt" Puru and various contributors, "Bubble Wall", 2012, New Brighton (photo January 2015)

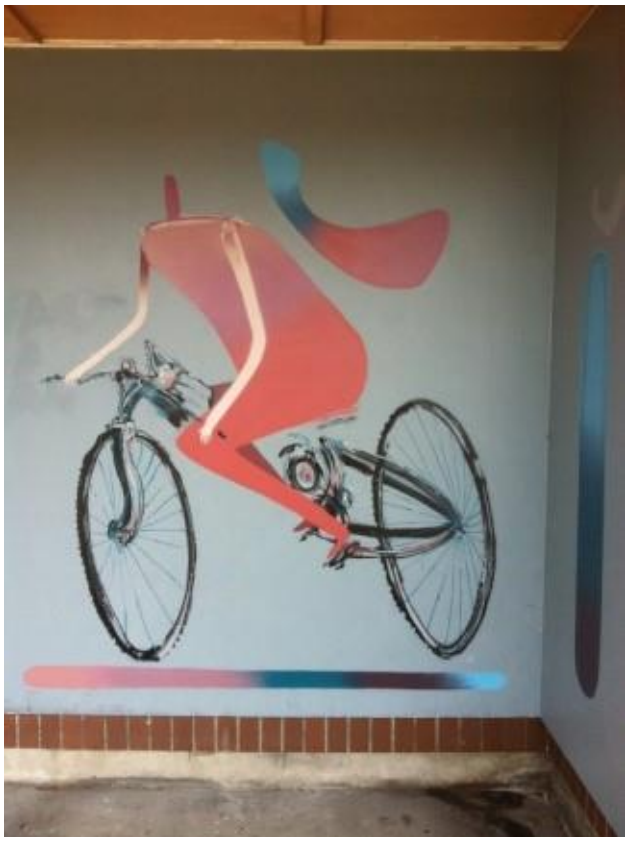

Figure 4.54: Drypnz, 2012, New Brighton (photo September 2012)

Figure 4.55: Porta, 2012, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure 4.56: Minx, "Mama Said Knock You Out", 2012, New Brighton, (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.57: Joseph Descamps, 2012, New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.58: Nemis and Drows, 2012, New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.59: Joseph Descamps, "Too Late", 2012, New Brighton (photo November 2012)

Figure 4.60: Jim Hobby (image), Andrew Coyle (poem), 2012, New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure 4.61: Porta, 2012, New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure 4.62: Various artists, "Such a Lovely Place Bro!", 2012, New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.63: JRIBL, 2012, New Brighton, (photo January 2016)

Figure 4.64: Mark Catley, 2012 New Brighton, (photo December 2012)

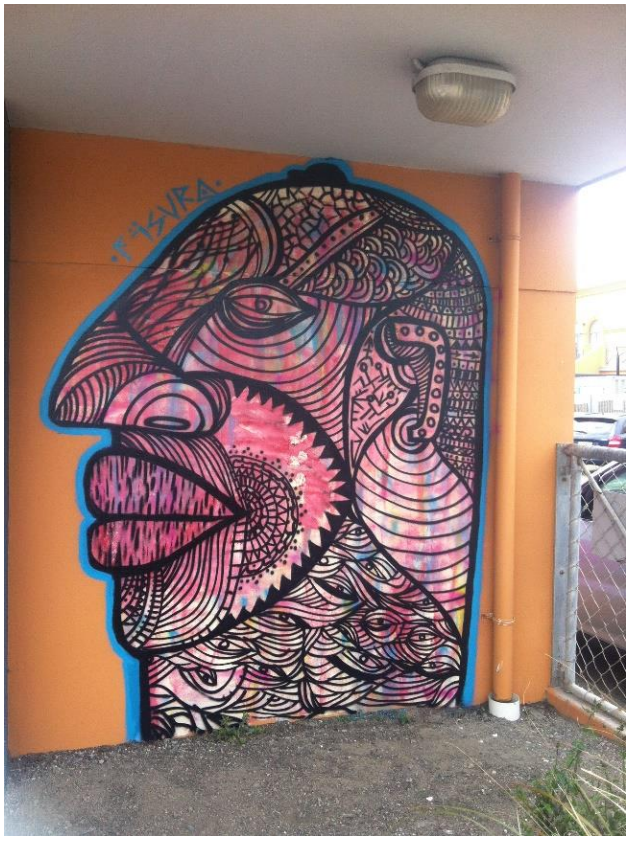

Figure 4.65: Fisura, 2012, New Brighton (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.66: Zoms, 2012, New Brighton (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.67: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes, 2012, New Brighton (photo October 2012)

Figure 4.68: SLK crew (Devos One, Ekos, Nemis, Drows and Smeagol), 2012, New Brighton (photo January 2015)

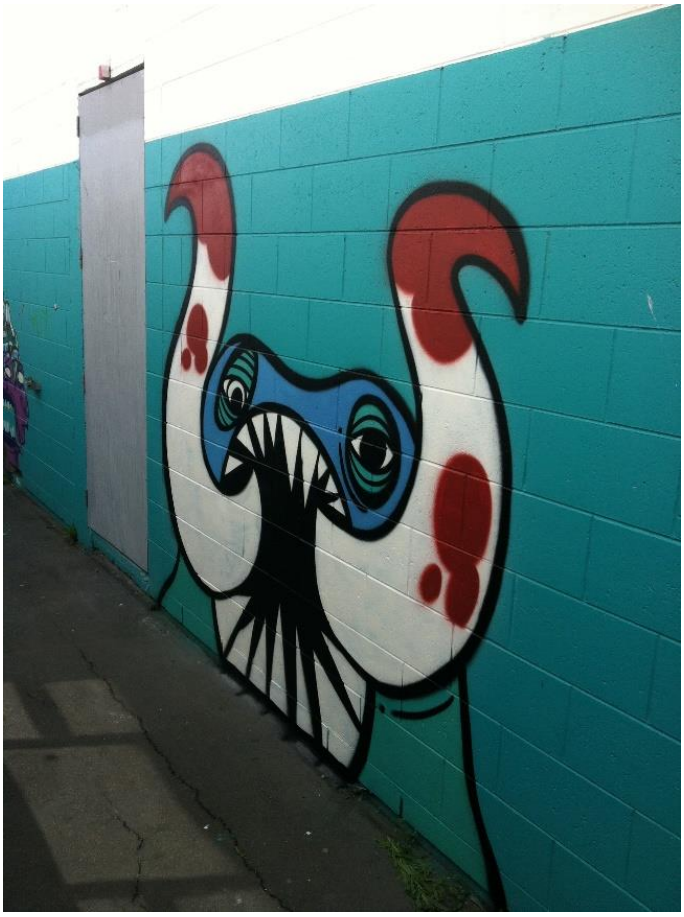

Figure 4.69: *Teeth, 2012, The Quad, New Brighton (photo December 2012)*

Figure 4.70: Joseph Descamps (top) and unknown artist (below), 2012 The Quad, New Brighton (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.71: Fisura, 2012, The Quad, New Brighton (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.72: Guts, 2012 The Quad, New Brighton, 2012 (photo December 2012)

Figure 4.73: Order, 2015, New Brighton (photo December 2015)

4: A broken playground: Graffiti and street art in the post-quake central city

> "It is the interplay between the urban environment and the artists who see the city as one giant canvas that captivates the imagination."[1]
>
> - **The Wooster Collective's Marc and Sara Schiller**
>
> "…if you imagine what this was like before, like, the normal sounds of a city. You know, cars, buses, people talking, children laughing and screaming. It is really weird, the silence. And the fact you could hear birds singing and that seems like, it shouldn't be like that. It's just, you know, wow. Where do we go from here?"[2]
>
> - **Architect David Sim, inside the Christchurch central city cordon in *The Human Scale*, 2012**

Introduction: Damaged

In an empty lot on Victoria Street, just out of sight of passing traffic, a colourful intervention expressed the pervasive impact of the earthquakes upon Christchurch's central city. The physical damage, emotional toll, and air of constant change evident in the inner city were all condensed into an evocative image that provided a fitting reflection of the surrounding environment. The work, apparently produced in mid-to-late 2011 by an unidentified artist, combined pasted paper and painted elements directly onto the brick surface, depicting a figure who, while likely suggesting the power of nature, could also be understood as a personification of the stricken central city. The writhing human figure, its head thrown back with a thrash of wild blonde hair, tore away at its chest, exposing its heart

[1] Marc and Sara Schiller, "City View", in *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art,* pp. 10-11
[2] *The Human Scale*, dir. Andreas Dalsgaard, Final Cut, 2012

(Fig. 5.1). If the figure's action physically echoed Clark Kent's transition into Superman in a time of need, the surrounding landscape ensured this gesture was instead one of desperation, frustration, and tragedy. Instead of some heroic reveal, the figure was overrun by forces and seemingly rendered powerless. A cloud of blood red escaped from the exposed wound, while streams of blue, green and sandy yellow wriggled outward like released ectoplasm come to life, evocations of the natural world and unavoidably the quakes as evidence of the earth's elemental power.[3] Underneath, painted in bright red directly onto the brick surface, read the word "DAMAGED". A declaration not only of the physical state of the post-quake city, but also a reflection of the wounded city's psyche. By mid-2012 the tattered state of the paste-up portion of the work left the figure barely perceptible.[4] Remnants of the pasted paper hung limply off the surface, dulled and aged by the elements, the deteriorated state of the crinkled, peeling and torn figure suggested the ongoing change. Much like swathes of the city still defined by the earthquakes' lingering legacy, the work was rendered almost unrecognisable from its original appearance. While the impact of the earthquakes was felt across Christchurch, the scale of damage in the central city was overwhelming, and as it slowly regained functionality amid the demolition and slow reconstruction, it was evident that the urban centre was irrevocably changed. The altered (and still changing) central city has provided an attractive setting for graffiti and street art's often uninvited performances. Their presence has reflected and subverted the experience of this urban landscape, engaging with the specifics of the post-disaster setting, while also employing more generic tropes and inevitably raising issues surrounding the inner city's civic, cultural and historic importance.

The central city's slow and drawn-out rebirth after being quickly shut-off following the February quake has been a significant aspect of Christchurch's post-quake narrative.[5] Initially rendered quiet and empty, pockets of activity slowly returned amidst the massive task of demolition and rebuilding. The expectations of an urban environment were turned upside down, and this surprising and often contrasting setting has provided artists with almost unlimited physical and conceptual potential. If life went on in the suburbs, where the art often invoked this communal experience, the central city, filled with contrasts of empty and active, deconstructed and reconstructed, has provided a playground for graffiti and street artists to explore and adorn, the art they have left behind has populated the broken streets and buildings. Although now commonly encountered in suburban and even rural spheres, the

[3] Indeed, the figure might even be seen as a representation of Mother Nature herself, and a comment on the link between natural disasters and the damage caused to the earth by human consumption.
[4] By 2013, as the Victoria Street area of the central city was rebuilt, the work was lost as a new building was erected, seemingly another fitting reflection of the city's recovery and erasure of the lingering signs of the quakes.
[5] This documentation and discussion has spanned constant media coverage, but also books such as *Once in a Lifetime* (2014) and films such as *The Human Scale* (2012) and *The Art of Recovery* (2015).

global emergence of graffiti and street art has historically been tied to the urban experience. The complex, dense and bustling nature of cities such as New York, Paris, and London, or the favelas of Rio de Janiero have inspired generations of intrepid guerrilla artists to engage with their physical and social surroundings.[6] Christchurch's central city, defined within the "Four Avenues" (Bealey, Moorhouse, Fitzgerald and Rolleston), is an important site in the city's civic identity and history.[7] It has long provided an array of spatial, social and commercial relationships for intrepid graffiti and street artists to investigate and manipulate, from multi-story buildings and advertising to peripheral and under-used spaces such as back alleys and empty buildings.[8] However the post-quake inner city has been markedly different from the expectations of an urban setting as active and physically dense. Christchurch's inner city has required re-construction on a massive level, and, for a time, emptiness has replaced the bustling movement of people. Yet, post-quake central Christchurch has provided perhaps the most dense and visible presence of graffiti and street art across the city. The juxtaposition of names, faces, figures, phrases, and everything in between, with the broken buildings and changing surroundings has provided the opportunity to reflect upon the state of flux evident in the post-quake inner city, the history and potential futures of a setting filled with signs of vacated life, symbols of civic identity, individual memories and the opportunity for exploration.

This chapter begins with a consideration of graffiti and street art's relationship with urban space, the symbolic status of Christchurch's central city and the physical and emotional impact of the earthquakes specifically upon this area, an important task due to the scope of change across the urban landscape. The significant impact and scale of change upon the central city leads to a consideration of the presence of official memorials and the ability of informal interventions to evoke associations of place. A desire to memorialise in the wake of the February earthquake in particular has been strong and evident across the inner city. While overt acts and objects of memorial have been common, street art has provided more intimate and open-ended suggestions and possible meanings in regards to the memorialisation and personification of the city. This consideration of the memory of things now missing, leads to the ability of graffiti and street art to respond to a lack of presence throughout the central city as it has recovered. Many people avoided the central city, distrustful of the physical environment, affected by the memories of the February earthquake, or the perception that there was

[6] Henry Chalfant, "Foreword", in Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 8

[7] The "fourth" Avenue is in fact classified as Deans Avenue by CERA, despite the historical acceptance of Rolleston Avenue. (Uncredited, "The Four Avenues: Which is the fourth?", *The Press*, August 18, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/10393734/The-Four-Avenues-Which-is-the-fourth, accessed September 24, 2015)

[8] Although graffiti in particular in pre-quake Christchurch was also importantly tied to peripheral and fringe spaces, such as various train track yards and the sale yards in Addington, there was also a notable presence in the more populated spaces of the central city.

no reason to return. While struggling to regain its sense of activity, the central city has been populated with the presence of both artists and the traces of their activities, with figurative and textual interventions that fleetingly engage an audience. Entangled with the human presence is the exploration of the central city in the wake of its newly unfamiliar appearance. While sweeping changes have rendered the central city a difficult place to reconcile with previous experiences, examples of graffiti and street art have suggested inquisitive exploration as an act of reconnection, performing in a manner less grandiose than larger landmarks that have attempted to define parts of the city.

Concrete jumble: Graffiti, street art and urban space

Across the globe, graffiti and street art illuminate not only the stimulation of the urban city as a site of busy and diverse activity, but also the contestation of the social, political and commercial forces evident in ubiquitous advertising, traffic and ordinance signs, celebrated architecture and the non-use spaces that fall between. While a city might be considered constituted by the people within its boundaries, the physical qualities are also defining and imbued with social meaning. McCormick has established how graffiti and street art, like other art movements before them, are a reflection of our shifting relationship to the contemporary urban experience, suggesting that we must understand the city as a muse in order to

> …contextualize the kinds of expressions it engenders. Just as we might look back at the paintings produced in the early decades of the twentieth century- the frenetic rapture, for instance, of Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*- to see how the city once inspired a modernist optimism, we can also use the myriad and ever-evolving ways in which subsequent generations came to interact as artists directly with the urban landscape to help us chart a more dysphoric regard for the city. Surely the rise of graffiti as a rigorous creative practice and codified language in the post-war era- when cities were subject to failing infrastructures, white flight, and major socioeconomic shifts downward as the suburbs became a new middle-class ideal- is no mere coincidence.[9]

This influence is evident in the way street interventions engage with civic structures. Waclawek has noted the duality of graffiti and street art's relationship to a city's structural make-up:

> …street art practices are guided by and guide a city's visual aesthetic in that they both assimilate that environment and recreate it… Both graffiti and street art practices illuminate the city with signs of life.

[9] McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 19-25

> The walls, streets, billboards and all manner of structural details that make up a city are brought to life with the addition of urban painting.[10]

Each addition, from a painting to a sticker, alters the previous appearance of a city, serving as a disruption to an intentionally designed make-up, a critical investigation of urban space through its diverse narratives and simple oppositional existence. Both McCormick and Waclawek's suggestions can be applied to Christchurch's post-quake setting as the physical and conceptual muse for the creation (and reading) of the graffiti and street art that has appeared across the central city's ruptured and changing terrain. An environment overloaded with unavoidable signs of the quakes' impact, the inner city has been a site of investigation, exploration and resulting creative opportunity. The state of the post-quake central city has ensured that the appearance of graffiti and street art can be seen as providing acts of beautification, activation, population and exploration; acts that were made meaningful by a setting that had been irrevocably altered physically and psychologically.

Notably, urban interventions raise the dynamics of the intersection of art, artist, audience and location. The perhaps private expression and reception evident in the creation and interpretation of art, is problematized by its public placement, and especially so in urban interventions where authorship is often clouded by anonymity and engagements are largely fleeting and un-instructed, and as such often more personal. The gaze, and therefore reading, of a spectator is always multi-faceted and as Simon Sheikh suggests, depends on the work itself, its placement within a specific setting, and importantly:

> …the placement of the spectator socially (in terms of age, class, ethnic background, gender, politics and other factors) or more broadly speaking, experiences and intentionalities. We can, thus, speak of three variable categories, that, in turn, influence the definition of each other; work, context and spectator. None of which are given, and each of which are conflictual, indeed agonistic.[11]

While Sheikh refers to a broad experience of art, urban spaces provide an interesting location for the reception of art, largely due to the dense and less self-selecting population (and equally varied activities), the abundance of sensory stimulants, and the sense of change rendered by an array of forces. Guerrilla urban artists operate in public space but are often less concerned with the construction of a defined idea of a "public", than the act of communication. Such interventions, as conquests of public space, reflect the artist's presence but are open to interpretation due to the manner in which they are encountered. The artist's anonymity, or pseudo-identity, ensures that the

[10] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 9

[11] Simon Sheikh, "In the Place of the Public Sphere? Or, the World in Fragments", in Paula Booker and Marnie Slater, eds., *Public Good –Itinerant Responses to Collective Space*., Wellington, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, 2008, pp. 47-48

connection with the audience is always clouded and open to the viewer's connection to the time and place within which they engage with a work, bringing their own experience and associations as a context. Waclawek has explained this relationship between artist, audience and place evident in the experience of street art. She suggests that due to both authorised and unauthorised movement by those occupying these spaces, a city's make-up is in constant flux, and that graffiti and street art highlight the varied uses of public space by contesting expected imagery:

> As such, the artworks also function as vehicles for identity formation vis-à-vis their sites of dissemination. The place appropriated and subsequently vacated by the artist is marked out as a space to be occupied by the viewer. Of course, any work of art, anonymous or not, can be interpreted as the work of both the artist and the audience through the process of reception. However, this relationship is particularly acute in relation to street art. Owing to its temporal nature, and because the artists work under pseudonyms, the ambiguity of authorship invites the spectator to consider the work in the present moment.[12]

In Christchurch, a setting where pervasive change has rendered memories (both collective and individual) distant and confused, this relationship becomes even more complicated, stimulating recognition of a newly unfamiliar site by encouraging reflection. As Solnit has noted of San Francisco, a city can be understood as a collection of cities laid over each other's ruins, but they are also constructed by individual experiences of the people traversing its streets; every corner coloured by unique memories and encounters.[13] In post-quake Christchurch change has not been incremental, the layered existence of the city's past essentially exposed and removed in a flurry of deconstruction and protracted rebuilding.

A city that we used to know: The earthquakes and the central city

On the fringe of the inner city, the word "HEAL" was painted in large blue letters on a grey concrete shed by artist Jeremy Sauzier **(Fig. 5.2)**. Although a necessary task for both citizens and the built environment across the city, like a continuation of *Damaged*, it was an apt declaration for the inner city, where the condensed impact of the February earthquake rendered it in need of huge transformation. Local filmmaker Gerard Smyth's documentary *When a City Falls* (2012) begins with a serene montage of pre-earthquake Christchurch. The central city is prominent amongst the opening

[12] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, pp. 102-104

[13] Rebecca Solnit, "The Ruins of Memory", in Mark Klett, with Michael Lundgren, essays by Philip L. Fradkin and Rebecca Solnit, and an interview with the photographer by Karin Breuer, *After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 2006, p. 18

shots; the blooming blossom trees lining Hagley Park, a cyclist rolling along Worcester Boulevard towards Cathedral Square, and the well-known Ballantynes department store in the busy City Mall depict the inner city prior to September 4, 2010. While lacking the spread, size and residential population of larger urban metropolises, Christchurch's pre-quake city centre, and in particular its architectural environment (and the congregation of important political, economic and cultural institutions), was an important part of the wider city's history and identity for both residents and visitors alike, even if many residents might have rarely visited the inner city, finding more convenience in suburban indoor malls.[14] Despite being cordoned off for a significant period, Christchurch's inner city has, in particular narratives, served as a visual symbol of the quakes' legacy, the broken Cathedral a common icon of the city's immediate post-quake state.[15] Ansley has noted how the city's history could be experienced through the condensed presence of heritage buildings located within the Four Avenues, providing the opportunity to track the city's "European history precisely by a visit to Christ Church Cathedral, or the old Provincial Council Buildings, or the Arts Centre, or the Canterbury Museum." [16] These buildings formed a vital aspect of the city's identity, and the damage they suffered in the earthquakes was viewed as a blow to the city's sense of self.

Even in the suburbs, street art referenced the importance of the central city as a symbol of Christchurch's collective identity and the shared earthquake experience. In North New Brighton, just meters from the beach, a series of stencils by street artist HIM filled an empty lot with images of some of the inner city's iconic heritage architecture **(Fig. 5.3)**.[17] The black and white images of the Anglican Cathedral, the Catholic Basilica on Madras Street, and the former ANZ Bank building on High Street, were sprayed over a haze of colour onto boards then attached to the exposed fence, each image annotated "RIP", signalling a sense of attachment to the memorable buildings. Along the top of the corrugated fence, the artist left the message: "If I had 200L of paint, the red zone would be beautiful, art can make anything amazing". The choice of these buildings rather than more localised examples highlighted the iconic status of the central city's architecture. Even in a suburban setting where

[14] Pre-quake Christchurch's central city had suffered from a decline in residential population and had suffered commercially due to competition from suburban malls, leading many to question whether the CBD was in fact still a significant part of the city's make-up. Australian commentator Ian Maxwell in an opinion piece for *The Press* noted the strange relationship between Christchurch and the central city: "A visit to the suburban malls highlighted that many of the residents spent their lives entirely in the suburbs of this tiny city, in some sort of consumer frenzy. Either the 3km trip into town was too difficult, or the malls too attractive, or the city too scary…" (Ian Maxwell, "Hasty gutting of city will only increase social divide", *The Press*, Wednesday, April 4, 2012, p. A19)

[15] Over time, other post-quake aspects have become as equally popular, from Gap Filler projects to new architecture such as the Transitional Cathedral.

[16] Ansley, *Christchurch Heritage*, p. 8

[17] The intersection of Marine Parade and Bowhill Road was a favourite location for the artist, who produced a number of stencilled images on the opposing corners **(Appendix 1: Fig. A11)**.

significant buildings and pieces of more specific histories had been lost, their depiction symbolised the collective impact of their demise or damaged state. The black and white images, like grainy archival photographs, emphasised the historic nature of the buildings, but also suggested their reduction to elements of the city's pre-quake past.[18] Such iconic sites would never be viewed in the same way again. But if these important structures had been lost or forever altered, the central city has also proved a site where a number of new, smaller additions have made sense of this change.

While the September 2010 quake caused significant damage to the central city's built environment, as heritage buildings were checked, a number damaged and some eventually demolished, the impact on the perception of the area was lessened by the lack of casualties. While largely cordoned off for several days, with specific buildings inaccessible for longer, even with the appearance of fencing and road cones, the central city remained largely recognisable, accessible and active, almost returning to business as normal. February 22nd, 2011, however, would irrevocably change Christchurch's inner city. When Smyth's documentary shifts forward several months, an array of indelible images and sounds usurp the calm of the film's opening sequence. The scenes encapsulate the condensed chaos, panic, tragedy and disbelief that shrouded the central city that day. The film captures buildings collapsing around scattering crowds, cars crushed under fallen stone and concrete, debris littering the streets and dust filling the air, all captured in shaky hand held images, revealed the unsettling reality of the unfolding events within the inner city. The droning sirens and alarms, the human voices, and the frenzied movement of distressed and disbelieving crowds, would for many people become etched upon the enduring perceptions and memories of the central city.[19] Trust in the central city's built environment was shaken. Even for those not present in the inner city, there was still a sense of connection to these scenes, if not through a human element, then through the personal memories and associations of place that were stirred by images of the broken buildings. The sounds and sights captured in Smyth's documentary have haunted Christchurch's post-quake inner city, evoked in the remaining damage and vacant spaces where familiar buildings once stood, the comfort of collective and personal history clouded by the ferocity of nature and the following change at the hands of politicians, planners, engineers, and demolition and construction crews.

In the immediate wake of the February earthquake the central city was locked behind a large cordon and patrolled by armed military.[20] While the cordon was necessary due to the fragile, dangerous and

[18] Even though the Anglican Cathedral remains standing in a damaged state, the image of the erect spire will now be found only in photographs and documentation.
[19] Smyth's film also captures footage of people frantically working together to try and free victims from collapsed buildings, but even these acts were tempered with a sense of desperation.
[20] Spanning Fitzgerald, Bealey and Moorhouse Avenues and Park Terrace, the central city cordon covered 3.9 square kilometres.

ultimately uncertain state of the inner city, it created not only a physical separation, but a psychological and social distance as well. The cordon fences offered disjointed views of the eerily empty city beyond reach, inaccessible and yet an unavoidable concern and undeniable interest to those on the outside. Behind the cordon, buildings leaned precariously, streets were empty save for rubble, and businesses were abandoned, with window displays gathering dust. The inner city became a ghost town, with urban stories circulating of its surreal state, from the overpowering odour created by rotting food, to the escapades of a vagabond enjoying free reign of an abandoned hotel. Accessible only to officially authorised entrants, the area was like a separate territory. Displaced inner city residents required passes and were given time restraints to retrieve items from their homes. Those who did gain access inside the red zone discovered a scene frozen in an empty, almost silent, state; haunted by the signs of the human presence that had vanished so quickly.

The impact on the central city left it almost unrecognisable, and for many, loaded with the associations of February 22, 2011. Yet it also remains a site where generations of people have lived their lives. As the city opened up and a sense of activity returned to various degrees, visitors had to consider the disconcerting surroundings that juxtaposed a pervasive sense of emptiness and damage against signs of returning life and activity. Christchurch, and specifically its central city, has been in transition from a post-disaster city to something less defined by the impact of the quakes, something resembling the ordinary expectations of a functional urban setting. In his 2014 essay "Desire for the gap", Gap Filler co-founder Ryan Reynolds further elaborated on the state of the city, acknowledging that defining the present state was a complex task, and notably so in the urban centre:

> It is a *post* city, the remains of the complicated, contradictory, post-colonial place it once was, with a centre that is 70 per cent destroyed and sparsely populated. It is also, now, a *pre* city, with three years' worth of plans, consultation, ideas and designs that exist mainly as a massive set of aspirations yet to be enacted.[21]

This transitional setting has required constant reconciliation, loaded with suggestions of the past, immediate points of interest, and almost unlimited potential, not only for shiny new buildings but also for smaller individual expressions. People have had to reconsider their attachment to a severely altered physical and psychological environment, to make sense of the loss of markers of history and memory.

The central city cordon was reduced over time, and officially removed in June 2013. Although fences, containers and barriers remained a prominent presence, maintaining smaller, separate boundaries, the reduction afforded a closer experience of the empty, damaged buildings awaiting their fate, and

[21] Ryan Reynolds, "Desire for the gap", in *Once in a Lifetime*, pp. 167-176

the dusty cleared lots strewn with piles of rubble and shoots of plant life. George Parker and Barnaby Bennett, in *Christchurch: The Transitional City, Pt. IV*, noted that the scale of change rendered post-quake central Christchurch "deeply disorientating".[22] While some sections retained hints of their past, it was often difficult to place one's position by the physical surroundings; recognisable façades were covered by shipping containers, and areas lacked the buildings that once gave them context, purpose and familiarity. The clearing of the central city continued long after the February earthquake. By September 2013 the city was apparently nearing the end of the demolition phase of the recovery process; *The Press* reported that 984 central city demolitions had been carried out since the September 2010 earthquake, and that at least a further 108 were scheduled.[23] In April 2012, the Band-Aid Bandits playfully commented on the public interest in the city's demolitions and, as Dr Suits recalled, the way the "general public were entertained by the sheer scale of destruction, literally across the road."[24] The artists attached a paper paste-up of a rosette to the fence surrounding the demolished Hotel Grand Chancellor, awarding the building's deconstruction "Best Demo 2012" in response to the throngs of people who gathered to watch the implosion **(Fig. 5.4)**.[25] Yet by mid-2015, while notable rebuilding was underway and shiny new buildings had risen, a number of damaged buildings remained standing and vacated (in many cases the insides covered in graffiti). Massive, slow moving cranes have dominated the skyline. This presence was playfully referenced in 2012 in another wheat-pasted image by the Band-Aid Bandits. On Peterborough Street, a simple cartoon crane, grunting "Nom Nom" with satisfaction as it fed on the city's damaged concrete and steel landscape, appeared like a baby animal mimicking its larger brethren **(Fig. 5.5)**.[26] Yet while the larger cranes were literally breaking down the city's damaged buildings like lumbering, creaking, industrial dinosaurs eating away at the concrete jungle and leaving behind barren plots of land, the Band-Aid Bandits' crane, drawn with thick black lines, was locked in a more futile effort, its small size less of a match for the large wall on which it was placed.[27] If the Band-Aid Bandits animated the city's ubiquitous cranes, other artists and commentators have extended this metaphorical device to the city itself.

The wounded body: The city as victim

[22] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 4
[23] Georgina Stylianou, "Demolitions draw to end", *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A3
[24] Interview with artist, November, 2015
[25] Uncredited, "Company's hotel demolition job 'award' winner", *The Press*, Friday, April 27, 2012, p. A5
[26] Uncredited, "Dancing cranes rumble through city", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, June 29, 2013, p. A13
[27] Will Harvie, "Feast of the Dinosaurs", *The Weekend Press* (*Your Weekend* supplement), Saturday, December 15, 2012, pp. 12-13

The perceived importance of the central city, and its construction as a victim of the quakes, has been evident throughout the post-quake recovery in metaphorical language and imagery. Reynolds has compared the city's transitional phase to a period of adolescence, a period of potential and uncertain outcomes for the central city.[28] Regular proclamations of the CBD as the city's "heart" have positioned the central city as a vital element of the city's identity. Former Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) CEO Roger Sutton illustrated this perceived significance when he responded to criticism of the prioritising of the central city recovery seemingly at the expense of the suburbs: "I absolutely disagree because what is a city without its heart?"[29] Sutton was not alone in placing such importance upon the central city by using this comparison, such evocations a common refrain.[30] This metaphorical association draws from the geographic centrality of the inner city, but also suggests an influence upon wider Christchurch historically, culturally, commercially and politically. Describing the built environment in such metaphorical language serves to personify the urban landscape as a living organism, therefore extending a shared sense of the earthquake experience, the broken buildings as fractured limbs. Cultural geographer Ben Highmore has noted how such language can provide "an understanding of the city as something like a body, requiring lungs (parks, for instance), good circulation (roads, pavements, traffic lights and so on) and efficient expulsion of waste (drains and sewers)."[31] On St Asaph, a small woodcut image of a heart, in a graphic, anatomically correct style, was pasted in a gap cut from a down pipe **(Fig. 5.6)**, suggesting this functionality, with the pipes serving as arteries, and the pumping heart causing the city to pulse with life. Yet, the description of the city centre as a heart provides a symbolic potential alongside such functional associations. A heart suggests not just the circulation of blood around a body, giving life to its disparate parts, but also a range of intangible qualities, a symbol of an entity's potential for good and love. In post-quake Christchurch the view of the CBD as the city's heart has also been accompanied by the consideration of the city as a victim of the earthquakes, a wounded body in need of care. This personification of the built environment as a victim was exemplified in the over-sized sticking plasters by the Band-Aid Bandits that adorned an array of damaged buildings across the central city **(Figs. 5.7-5.9)**.[32] The paste-

[28] Ryan Reynolds, "The Adolescent City", a talk delivered at TEDxEQChCh, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGYF7nG0UsQ, accessed October 21, 2012
[29] Roger Sutton, "A blank canvas for new beginnings", in *Once in a Lifetime*, p. 53
[30] Another example of the application of this metaphor was by noted architect Sir Miles Warren, who expressed concern about the inner city being re-built as a low-rise, green space. (Chris Tobin, "City 'runs risk of no heart'", *Mainland Press*, Wednesday, January 25, 2012, p. 1)
[31] Highmore draws specifically on the 1949 Orson Welles film *The Third Man* and its use of Viennese sewers as a symbolic setting. (Ben Highmore, *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2005, pp. 3-4)
[32] This extension of care was also evident in the *Lyttel Stitches* hearts in Lyttelton, where the original human gesture was eventually given to the built environment. However, the Band-Aids provide a more literal attempt at healing and therefore personification.

ups, by the Band-Aid Bandits (Dr Suits and Jen), were created following the June aftershock when after being sent home from work the idea crystallised.[33] The size and graphic quality, of thick outlines and simplified detail, were an attempt by the artist to suggest the huge task of healing the city faced, and to provide a more light-hearted touch to the environment, despite Dr Suits' fears that they may be received as insensitive.[34] The plasters not only provided a suggestion of healing, but also an offer of comfort in the accompanying declarations such as "I'll kiss it better", echoing the caring words of a parent to a child. Justin Paton, writing of the Band-Aid on a Manchester Street corner, noted the symbolic resonance of the gesture of applying a sticking plaster to a child's injury, as more about reassurance that healing:

> Transferring that gesture to a broken public wall is both tender and bitterly ironic. On one hand, it feels like an expression of genuine care, with the artist as a kind of urban physician, doctoring to the city's wounded spaces. But you can also see it as an expression of anxiety and frustration, as if the artist is wondering, in the face of all this damage, what anyone can actually *do*. Are all our symbolic expressions of care and concern just Band-Aids on an unhealable wound? Whatever the answer, this tattered bit of street art is also weirdly exemplary, demonstrating how the best public artworks, rather than guzzling huge budgets, can manage to do more with less.[35]

The gesture of care represented by the plasters may have been futile, but it did extend a touching sense of humanity and expressed the importance of the recovery of the built environment for the city's collective well-being, all with an intentional sense of playful levity **(Fig. 5.10)**. The city as a victim of the quake and the care extended by the Band-Aid Bandits' plasters also suggests the attachment to the area as a space of lived experience, the healing of damage an attempt to regain the pre-quake state, to rediscover spaces where life has been played out. While the plasters provided a literal reference to the city as a living victim, other examples of graffiti and street art have also suggested the city as alive in a less metaphorical sense; their constant erasure and renewal a reflection of the city's ongoing lifecycle. The impact of the earthquakes upon the central city provided yet another chapter, presenting new and altered spaces to consider, and for conversations on city walls to begin again.

Acts of remembrance: Memorials and memories

[33] Interview with artist, November, 2015
[34] Interview with artist, November, 2015
[35] Paton, "Perimeter Notes", in *Bulletin,* B.167, p. 19

In the middle of the barren City Mall, painted directly on a grey concrete wall, a large orange tinged rose and detailed green and brown ceremonial wreath occupied a blue-skied landscape evoking the Canterbury Plains. Beneath the rolling green hills, a geometric sub-terrain of angular coloured blocks suggested the unexpected and jagged seismic potential of the ground underneath the city **(Fig. 5.11)**. Appearing in February 2014, the painting's purpose was made clear by the accompanying script: "Dedicated to those who past [sic], 22-02-11". The colourful image and simple text revealed the work, by unidentified artists, to be a memorial to the February earthquake three years previous, not only explicitly to those who lost their lives, but perhaps, due to the immersion within the surrounding broken environment, to the city itself. The bright colours provided a lively sense of renewal to the central city, not an official act of remembrance guided by city authorities, but an independent gesture juxtaposed with the still-all-too evident impact of the quakes on the surrounding environment. The combination of deaths and pervasive physical damage that occurred in the central city, rendered it unsurprising that acts of memorialisation, from small gestures to larger installations, have been common occurrences. The appearance of graffiti and street art has in many cases been less about memorialisation and more about memories, through the associative combination of the artist's intention, the audience's experience and the influence of the landscape. Not always explicit memorials, such additions have often invoked the city as a space of personal memories and attachment, creating unexpected moments of engagement with a city changed forever.[36]

An official memorial was inevitable in the wake of the significant impact of the earthquakes. As would be expected, the 2012 Christchurch City Recovery Plan specified a significant earthquake memorial to be conceived and constructed. The central city, as a historically significant collective site, and due to the pervasive impact of the quakes on this part of the city, was an inevitable location for such a memorial.[37] Yet by 2015, despite potential concepts being released for public consultation, the memorial was still unfinished, revealing the lengthy and difficult process of producing such a work.[38] The creation of a significant public monument to the earthquakes and the losses suffered perhaps illustrates what art writer and curator Ralph Rugoff describes as "a knee-jerk reflex in almost every part of the world" to memorialise events in notable, public, material form in a construction of cultural

[36] The central city has been an important location for communal memorial services as well, with a large anniversary service held in Hagley Park and others at sites such as City Mall and other significant locations.
[37] It has already been apparent that memorials have occurred throughout the city, from services to works of art (the *Crux* crosses in Lyttelton, Youle's *I seem to temporarily have misplaced my sense of humour* in Sydenham), but due to the civic significance and the events of February 22, 2011 being so strongly connected, the central city has unsurprisingly been a prominent site for a range of memorials.
[38] Ralph Rugoff, "Remembering to forget to remember", *Bulletin of the Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.169, Spring, September-November, 2012, pp. 6-11; Michael Wright, "Christchurch quake memorial plans revealed", http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/64345669/christchurch-quake-memorial-plans-revealed, accessed December 20, 2014

maturity or sophistication.[39] McCormick and Ethel Seno have also suggested that the apparent obligation to occupy city parks, squares and other public spaces in towns and cities around the world with statues and memorials to forgotten figures and events illustrates the construction of collective identity more so than the attempt to learn from the past.[40] This construction of identity was already exemplified in Christchurch's central city in the statues of civic figures, the *First World War Citizens War Memorial* by William Trethewey next to the Cathedral or *The Bridge of Remembrance* on Oxford Terrace in honour of Canterbury troops from multiple wars. These public memorials, stoic reminders of the city's history and colonial identity, having either survived intact or returned to their plinths, now coloured by the additional layered context of the quakes, have attempted to remain visible amongst a changing physical and social environment, anchoring the city's past as a significant part of its present identity. But the impact of the earthquakes has also rendered these reminders of Christchurch's past more distant, obscured by the fresh scars across the city. While the creation of an official earthquake memorial would necessarily engage in the construction of post-quake civic identity by attempting to consider the collective impact of the quakes and preserve it for future generations, such a project must be considered in light of the more immediate physical and psychological post-quake setting.

Public memorials are often monumental in form, and require a drawn out process of development in an attempt to represent a broad sense of public, both those directly affected by the quakes and future generations who will inherit the legacy and narratives of the experience. The conception and construction of such forms are saddled with numerous issues, and in Christchurch the changing physical surroundings have provided a significant obstacle. Permanent memorials rely upon a relationship to the setting in which they are created, and Christchurch's constantly shifting post-quake landscape has presented a difficult terrain.[41] In early 2012, art writer Justin Paton, ruminating on the ongoing changes around the post-quake city, claimed that it would take time for a memorial to make sense in the city; that such a form of public art required a steady backdrop as a setting.[42] Post-quake Christchurch's constant flux, still in the lingering grasp of the impact of the quakes physically and emotionally, led Paton to declare that the: "…catharsis and 'closure' implied by monuments are all wrong for this moment, when the prevailing emotion city-wide… is not sober retrospection but some persistent mix of resignation, irritation, grief and ever-so-tentative hope."[43] At that time, Christchurch was still rattling with slowly diminishing aftershocks, and the central city was still early in the

[39] Rugoff, "Remembering to forget to remember", *Bulletin*, B.169, pp. 6-11
[40] Seno, ed., with McCormick, *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, p. 82
[41] Rugoff, "Remembering to forget to remember", *Bulletin*, B.169, pp. 6-11
[42] Justin Paton, "Here *and* Gone", in *Bulletin - Christchurch City Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu,* B.166, Summer, December 2011-February 2012, p. 32
[43] Ibid.

demolition phase, the damaged built environment more prominent than any signs of physical renewal. The constant reminders of the earthquakes across the central city rendered an official permanent memorial unnecessary, the inability to forget all too obvious. Paton again highlighted the way the city's ruins would inevitably overshadow any form of public art that sought closure, arguing that while memorials commemorate something not tangibly present, something lost, the earthquakes continue to be evident in Christchurch:

> There's not an art object out there that can compete in eloquence with all the instant ruins on view in the city- the walls, columns and other remnants left standing at the end of one day's work, and often gone before the next day is done.[44]

Paton's assertion that memorial monuments suggest a sense of finality also suggests how such objects may in fact remove the need for the public audience to remember actively and mourn those being memorialised. Would a large-scale, permanent civic monument maintain a role within the city's collective memory, or would it in fact result in the ability to forget, to let go of the burden and allow its citizens a sense of closure?[45] A memorial object can take on the burden of remembrance for us. James Young has discussed the role of memory in the creation of monuments in the contemporary setting, drawing on Pierre Nora to suggest that instead of embodying memory, monuments may in fact displace memory and supplant the need to actively remember:

> …perhaps the more memory comes to rest in its exteriorized forms, the less it is experienced internally. In this age of mass memory production and consumption, in fact, there seems to be an inverse proportion between the memorialization of the past and its contemplation and study. For once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember. In shouldering the memory-work, monuments may relieve viewers of their memory-burden.[46]

Memorials in this sense are detached from daily experience, accessible at convenience rather than providing a constant source of reflection, allowing us to forget when not required by some social and civic obligation to commemorate.[47] In Christchurch, as the city is rebuilt, and the lingering signs of the earthquake are eradicated, this detachment becomes even more evident.

---

[44] Ibid.
[45] Six preliminary designs for a civic earthquake memorial were revealed in December 2014. (Michael Wright, "Christchurch quake memorial plans revealed", December 20, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/64345669/christchurch-quake-memorial-plans-revealed, accessed December 31, 2014)
[46] James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against itself in Germany Today", in WJT Mitchell, ed., *Art & The Public Sphere*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1992, p. 55
[47] Ibid.

While at the time of writing an official memorial remained unrealised, a range of memorial works have engaged with the unique post-quake setting in varied ways. These transitory memorials have achieved their acts of remembrance and engaged their audience by leaving lighter footprints within the still evolving setting. While there have been prominent and explicit memorial art works, the central city has also been adorned with countless informal and personal gestures of remembrance. A number of more informal memorials and artistic interventions have displayed and invited an active participation in the consideration of the earthquakes' disruption of the urban landscape. The addition of personal memorials to those lost, in the form of hand written notes, poems, flowers, hearts and photographs, have dotted central city streets attached to wire fencing, lamp posts or any other available surface surrounding sites of significance, such as the CTV building site where the hurricane fencing was adorned with expressions of grief and hope in an array of hand-crafted messages and intimate objects **(Fig. 5.12)**, or along a wooden fence at one end of Re:START Mall, which was used as a sort of impromptu message board. These informal memorials to the February earthquake have provided the post-quake setting with human reminders of the impacts upon survivors and families whose lives have been altered, necessary tools in dealing with grief and the scars of specific parts of the city, explicit reminders of the losses suffered.[48]

Alongside these personal tributes, there have been memorials that have aimed at an inclusive and participatory nature. The road cone flower tribute organised by Christchurch artist Henry Sunderland was a participatory memorial act that spread across the city. The simple act of placing a flower in the top of one of the thousands of road cones dotting Christchurch's streets caught on and provided an act of remembrance for the victims of the earthquake **(Fig. 5.13)**. The collective gesture transformed pervasive symbols of the earthquake's continued presence into portable carriers of remembrance that spread outside the city into international destinations. [49] The ubiquitous orange road cones provided a plastic plinth directly connected to the physical impact of the earthquakes upon the city's landscape. Much like the steel shipping containers, the cones have served as iconic symbols of the ongoing repair of the city's roads. The ability of the road cone tribute to embrace ephemerality and to illustrate the fluctuating nature of memory highlights Rugoff's suggestion that we "try to invent new ephemeral or immaterial modes of commemoration that draw on public participation".[50] While Sunderland was

[48] The Canterbury Museum's *2010/11 Earthquake Collection* includes a number of memorial items, such as flowers, painted stones and photographs. http://collection.canterburymuseum.com/search.do?highlight=19&view=label&page=6&db=object, accessed March 9, 2016

[49] The tribute saw participants from various countries take part, and it was also transported to Sendai in the wake of the Japanese Tsunami in 2011. (Gates, Charlie, "Cone tribute goes global", *The Press*, Thursday, February 23, 2012, p. A6; Chris Tobin, "Flowers in cones hits Japan", *Mainland Press*, Thursday, March 8, 2012, p. 3)

[50] Rugoff, Rugoff, "Remembering to forget to remember", *Bulletin*, B.169, pp. 6-11

credited as the instigator of the road cone tribute, the act became authorless as it spread across the city. Although each year the flowers wilted and the environment changed, the tribute has been renewed and re-freshened annually, the road cones remaining a prominent feature of Christchurch streets and as such enabling the tribute to continue.

Perhaps the most notable and popular memorial work in the transitional landscape has been Peter and Joyce Majendie's *185 Empty Chairs* **(Fig. 5.14)** which provided a touching expression of the lives lost in the February earthquake, while displaying a fitting sense of subtlety and transience, even while lasting longer than originally intended. The work was unveiled on the first anniversary of the February quake, originally located on the lawn of the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church before being relocated to a stone-covered lot behind the Transitional Cathedral and opposite the CTV building site. The artists laid out 185 chairs, each painted white, memorialising the loss of a life, and placed on 185 square metres of grass representative of renewal and regeneration.[51] The empty chairs suggested the absence of a loved one, the vacant space in a living room or kitchen table, but visitors were also encouraged to sit on the chairs and reflect, to actively be a part of the installation. As Peter Majendie explained, the installation, in its embrace of impermanence, has served as a site for contemplation and remembrance more so than memorial.[52] While the ordered lay-out echoed headstones in a grave yard, there was a symbolic reminder that life went on evident in the interactive potential. The chairs ran a gamut from wheelchairs to high chairs, providing a spectrum of the realities of the deceased.[53] Peter Majendie explained that the wheelchair also suggested the experience of survivors "rescued in a wheelchair, or having wound up in one."[54] Their white-washing imbued the installation with a ghostly presence and suggested the innocence of the unprepared victims. The imperfections of the hand-painted chairs and the simplicity of the concept made the work a fitting addition to the landscape.[55] The chairs' tactility and grounded nature offered an alternative to the bronze, steel or marble of more permanent and traditional memorials often raised on plinths and asserting a sense of grandeur that would have been an ill fit for the work's intended connection to the surrounding environment.[56]

If the *185 Chairs* have become an entrenched part of the post-quake inner city, even regarded by some as a more fitting permanent memorial than those official suggestions, another large work provided an

[51] While the first location was grassed, the second setting on the gravelly corner of Cashel and Madras Street necessitated a transplanted terrain.
[52] Jane Bowron, "Contemplating ghostly seats", *The Press*, Monday, May 21, 2012, p. A13
[53] Uncredited, "Installation represents victims' personalities", February 23, 2012, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/6464369/Installation-represents-victims-personalities, accessed March 15, 2016
[54] Ibid.
[55] One chair was painted by the father-in-law of one of the dead, the chair representative of his lost son-in-law
[56] Bowron, "Contemplating ghostly seats", *The Press*, p. A13

intentionally brief acknowledgement of the earthquakes' impact. The burning sculpture *Temple for Christchurch* (2013), based on the annual *Burning Man* arts festival held in Nevada, America, was designed to allow the passing of the public and individual burdens of the quakes. The large construction's design by artist and primary organiser Hippathy Valentine, which spanned forty metres in length, twenty-five metres in width and six metres in height, was based on the seismic data of the main February 22 earthquake. The effect was a rolling wave of vertical wooden beams made from reclaimed demolition timber, a three-dimensional realisation of the force of the quake. Constructed in a vacant inner city lot (formerly the site of the city's demolished convention centre), people were invited to leave messages on the sculpture's surface. The addition of fears and thoughts intended to load the *Temple* with the weight of the earthquake experience. The *Temple* sought to allow people to let go of the burden of memory, to release lingering fears and concerns and move on with their existence, as one scrawled comment read: "I'm tired of feeling tired. I'm tired of feeling anxious I miss my city…"[57] In addition to the more serious messages, the sculpture was also adorned with an array of comical comments, reflecting its public nature as a forum for the types of interventions, declarations and inscriptions found on walls across a city. However, rather than expressing an occupation of urban space and renewal as walls are cleaned and marked again, these comments were cleared away in the work's finale. In September 2013, for safety purposes, the work was moved to a more secure site in the rural setting of Motukarara where it was burned to the ground, providing a "release of the stories it had gathered".[58] While a symbolic gesture, the danger inherent in burning such a structure also inevitably ensured participation in this final act was largely impossible, distancing the audience from the process, further illuminating the removal of burden rather than encouraging active reflection. The *Temple* no longer occupies space in Christchurch as a memorial; it has no part to play in future generations' knowledge of the earthquakes' impact, concerned more with immediate clearance of the weight of the quakes. But in its own destruction, *Temple for Christchurch* shared in the ephemerality of urban art.

Graffiti artists have a long tradition of producing memorial and tributary murals that have honoured figures and events, from deceased graffiti writers **(Fig. 5.15)** and hip hop pioneers to political figures and others important to local and wider communities. Both sanctioned and unsanctioned, such tributes often combine letter-form graffiti with figurative and representative work. It is therefore unsurprising that graffiti artists have produced several murals that have dealt directly with the earthquake experience, acting as gestures of remembrance and memorialisation, while still imbued

[57] Charlie Gates and Nicole Mathewson, "Burning of art will release Christchurch stories", *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A1

[58] Nicole Mathewson, "Winner gets to torch art", *The Press*, Saturday, August 10, 2013, p. A13

with a sense of ephemerality that a more official monument would inevitably lack. In addition to the City Mall memorial and Sydenham's *Phoenix Wall* (although less explicitly a memorial tribute, its sentiment of recovery might be read as such), other murals have also served as earthquake memorials. Explicit examples were found in Riccarton, just outside the central city and further afield in Rolleston. On the rear exterior of a Riccarton building overlooking a railway track, a long collaborative mural by a number of graffiti artists, produced shortly after the February quake, memorialised the shattered city and celebrated the role of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) crews in the days following the earthquake. Covering a long stretch of space, the legal work juxtaposed the artists' graffiti pieces either side of a depiction of the broken Cathedral and a USAR member in full search and rescue garb, immediately recognisable symbols of the earthquake experience **(Fig. 5.16)**. Wongi "Freak" Wilson, one of the artists responsible for painting the mural, noted that the work was completed shortly after the February earthquake, and was intended as "purely a memorial and tribute wall and I think it reflected how a lot of people felt at that time."[59] Despite the mural's inclusive subject matter, it occupies a peripheral space, visible from the busy road but away from the immediate exposure that a more prominent location would provide, an indication of its status as an independent production rather than an official civic memorial. On a small wall on an empty lot in Rolleston, a large rose, evoking a tattoo "flash art" style, also served as an unexpected earthquake memorial, again featuring an explicit reference **(Fig. 5.17)**. While far removed from the damage of the central city or even more visibly impacted suburban settings, the work by an unidentified artist nevertheless provided an opportunity for remembrance while brightening up a vacant wall. These memorial paintings, as temporary acknowledgements of the quakes' impact and those lost, have been fitting for the still changing post-quake inner city, not seeking a sense of permanence but instead utilising the transient landscape. This ephemeral quality is part of the nature of graffiti and street art, a necessary aspect of their existence materially and the manner of their engagement with the surrounding environment: aerosol paint will fade in the elements, walls will be painted over, and cityscapes will change.

Christchurch's earthquake ruins provide an important contextual backdrop for both the experience of the inner city, and in the reception of an array of street art interventions. Each vacant lot or twisted concrete structure is intertwined with the events that have brought it into being, as well as the absence of physical forms that had provided pre-quake associations. The informal art that has occupied these spaces has often enabled triggers of association, not through explicit references but through their creation of moments of engagement with the viewer. Ruins can conjure up the concept of lapsed time, of events shrouded by passing years. Solnit argues that ruins have two stages, firstly

[59] Interview with artist, May, 2012

their creation through force, and second, their transformation into evidence of the past, through the abandonment or appreciation that allows them to "remain as a relic- as evidence… that corresponds to room in the culture or imagination for what came before".[60] The pervasive post-earthquake damage in Christchurch's central city is viewed by some as remnants to be cleared away for a new, rebuilt city to rise. In her essay "Resisting Erasure", Christchurch writer Sally Blundell recounts a selection of the frequent references to the post-quake central city as a "blank canvas" upon which the rebuild could be staged.[61] The use of the term 'blank canvas' by various figures commentating on the central city's rebuild highlights a desire to remove the physical legacy of the earthquakes' lingering presence and the psychological associations of such a visible impact. Solnit highlights that the removal of ruins creates a paradox, whereby "they represent a kind of destruction, but they themselves can be destroyed and with them the memory of what was once there and what it confronted."[62] Christchurch's earthquake ruins stand as temporary reminders, not revered as objects that will serve as memorials, but as undesirable stock to be cleared. However the clearing away of the impact of the earthquakes to create a sense of closure also affects significant aspects of the city's history and identity, connections to both collective and intimate memories. Solnit, discussing ruins as reminders in relation to the rebuilding of San Francisco over time following the 1906 earthquake, suggests that while memory is always incomplete, ruins can provide treasured links

> …to what came before, our guide to situating ourselves in a landscape of time. To erase the ruins is to erase the visible public triggers of memory; a city without ruins and traces of age is like a mind without memories.[63]

The remnants of buildings and the empty lots have acted as reminders of what occurred, but also of what had once filled these spaces and places and the experiences that gave them life and significance, and in many cases the small interventions by guerrilla and often anonymous artists, have triggered connections to the changes evident in the city's broken state.

The damaged Anglican Cathedral has provided an example of the symbolic value of ruins, with calls for the iconic building to retain some visible aspects of the quake damage in its rebuilt appearance, to act as a reminder of the impact upon the city itself. Artist Mike Hewson entered this discussion about the future of the Cathedral when he pasted a printed work onto the plywood supports that covered the entrance to the damaged shell of a popular record store at the almost unrecognisable Oxford Terrace end of Cashel Mall. *View from the Studio* (2012) **(Fig. 5.18)** utilised a photograph taken from

[60] Solnit "The Ruins of Memory", in *After the Ruins*, p. 21
[61] Perhaps not incidentally, the essay following Blundell's "Resisting Erasure" in *Once in a Lifetime,* is titled "A blank canvas for new beginnings", authored by CERA CEO Roger Sutton.
[62] Solnit "The Ruins of Memory", in *After the Ruins*, p. 21
[63] Ibid., p. 20

Hewson's Government Life studio of Cathedral Square at Christmas time, the square bathed in sunlight and a large Christmas tree visible in front of Trewethy's *First World War Citizens War Memorial*. In appearance, the image evoked a glance from a window, a familiar scene surveyed countless times. However, it was now a snapshot of something passed, a scene that despite all its familiarity, could no longer be accessed, and as such was loaded with new meanings. The image was directly adhered to the large plywood insert that covered the store's broken window, but also wrapped around the timber framing supports. The image was intended as a declaration of Hewson's belief that the Cathedral should be saved in its damaged form as "an important historical document… [that] should be retained as a memorial for future generations."[64] Hewson's opinion was inscribed in biro next to the installation on a piece of supporting timber: "We should try and keep some part of the cathedral rather than just demo-ing it". Hewson's message was not an overbearing visual component of the work, operating at the periphery of the image. The message was easily overlooked, allowing the image to function primarily through personal reflection and association, encouraging the viewer to draw on their own relationship to the Cathedral, even within an unexpected location. As such the intervention served as both a memorial to the damaged icon but also as a reminder of the significant role the building had played in the lives of many as a backdrop to varied memories and experiences through its constant presence.[65] The work's presence in the heavily impacted City Mall (near the initial incarnation of the container-constructed Re:START Mall, an iconic aspect of the inner city's rebirth), added further layers of attachment as a busy and popular part of the CBD.

Amongst the more overt acts of memorialisation, a range of interventions have engaged with the post-quake landscape in more subtle ways, triggering memories and associations of place without the explicit commentary surrounding the tragedies of the earthquakes. The interpretation of much graffiti and street art across the central city has been a result of the context provided by the surrounding environment, often lacking overt references to the earthquakes but still evoking an inevitable relationship. The central city has been populated by consecutive generations. Many authors have recounted their memories of the inner city, recalling small details, such as skating-boarding through

[64] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 32

[65] The significance of the Anglican Cathedral was also apparent in Kay Rosen's *Here are the people and there is the steeple* (2012) **(Appendix 1: Figure A12)** on the exposed rear wall of the Christchurch Art Gallery. Rosen's work references the children's rhyming finger game as a reference to the stricken Cathedral which sits in the line of sight from the painting along Worcester Boulevard. The interplay of the black text is founded on the word "PEOPLE" which literally forms the base of the image. Rosen explains that the text "is a verbal and visual metaphor for the controversial Christchurch Cathedral which is in turn an icon and name-bearer of the city. The PEOPLE built, grew, and sustained it." However, while Rosen's work is large, visually striking and requires a level of reflection to make the connection between the work and the object of its message, Hewson's work, which combined a personal statement with a direct reference, encouraged more immediate audience reflection through its familiarity. (Justin Paton, "Kay Rosen: Here are the people and there is the steeple", *Bulletin – Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.172, Winter, May-August, 2013, p. 48)

Cathedral Square, or eating at one of the many disappeared cafés.[66] In the 2012 documentary *The Human Scale*, Scottish architect David Sim, while visiting Christchurch's post-quake central city, ruminated on the connection between buildings and their attachment to experience over their physical forms:

> I think if you're a historian, you can talk about this English style, or this Victorian style. For ordinary people the buildings have a much more important value, which is about memory. Like: "that was the café where I used to go on Saturdays with my granny, that's the shop where I bought these shoes, that's where my hairdresser was, this is where I met my girlfriend. I was standing on the corner there. Down there we had our first coffee." These stories are more interesting because they touch us emotionally. What's great about cities is that cities are full of these stories, overlapping stories and memories.[67]

Such recollections might be personal memories of the authors, but they are also able to elicit from viewers associations of their own time spent in parts of the city that may no longer be accessible physically. Evoking stories of moments that have created a larger tapestry of an experience of a physical place, regardless of how insignificant such fleeting events may have initially seemed. On an exposed brick wall of a damaged and vacant Manchester Street building, another word painting by Jeremy Sauzier produced evocations of place that could be read in personal ways by viewers. In simplified blue block lettering (a companion to his "HEAL" painting), Sauzier covered the wall in the declaration "HOME" **(Fig. 5.19)**. While suburban houses had been turned into sites of expression, Sauzier's evocative declaration was less about the concept of a specific domicile or shelter, and more about the more general connection to the city as a site where we have made our homes through our lived experiences. As such, within the post-quake setting, it was an invitation to consider the shattered central city through personal attachment.

Physical environments are arguably made meaningful by our social interactions within them. Human geographers Leslie King and Reginald Golledge (1978) have observed how the spatial form of cities relates to patterns of human behaviour, and as such a city is established through an individual's experiences within it:

> The city that its residents know personally- the city of their minds- largely determines the world in which they have their life's experiences and through which they strive to gain their many daily satisfactions. This city of the mind is built on acquired information and experience. Beginning with the

[66] Such recollections were evident in various published articles. (Nic Low "Ear to the ground", *Sunday Star Times*, February 19, 2012, p. C12; Cropp, "My Year of Living Warily", *Sunday Star Times*, p. 69)
[67] *The Human Scale*, 2012

> world of early childhood, knowledge of the city grows eventually to influence the form of the many interactions between adult man and his environment.[68]

This connection to place and past, suggested in the discussion of ruins, was exemplified by retired engineer Charles Poynton's photographic additions to the cityscape, not conceived as an artistic project, but as functional reminders developed from an interest in the city's architecture. Dotted around the central city attached to the hurricane fencing that cordoned off the empty buildings, strategically placed photographs provided comparative views of city, like an analogue version of the smartphone City View Augmented Reality (AR) application developed by HitlabNZ in the wake of the February quake which allowed a virtual comparison.[69] Poynton's colour printed and laminated A4 photographs, suggested an attempt to reconcile the new state of the city with memories of the past **(Fig. 5.20)**. The images were a variety of pre-quake images and photographs taken the day after the September 2010 quake, serving as both references to the past and recognising the inevitable changes that would occur. Each photo was captioned with the location and date, providing contextual information to the viewer. But further to the comparative qualities of the photographs, the images also allowed a consideration of personal memories of the city, and as such encouraged reflection of the moments experienced in these altered spaces. The small images were subtle additions that triggered a moment of engagement, often experienced in passing and creating a moment of pause as the city of the past was returned and with it memories of the events that the viewer had lived in the previous incarnation of the city.

While Poynton's images were conceived and disseminated with a specific function but perhaps unintentionally also provided open readings, other small interventions in the central city commented on place in more cryptic ways. In many of these guerrilla interventions, the intention of the artist is not always immediately apparent, the viewer often drawing meaning from the juxtaposition of the image, the location and their personal histories. McCormick and Seno have noted how the work of street artists has suggested a turn towards "the temporality of outdoor work as a medium to make absence evident."[70] Indeed, the fleeting nature of work created in a constantly changing environment, coupled with the often anonymous or pseudonymous authorship, imbues such interventions with a sense of something been and gone, a connection even more apparent in Christchurch's inner city. An example of this potential is found in the subtle, anonymous addition of black crosses across the city, markings that were easily missed by a passing audience. The appearance of the small crosses on walls,

---

[68] Leslie King and Reginald Golledge, *Cities, Space, and Behaviour: The Elements of Urban Geography*. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978, pp. 4-5

[69] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 130. Comparative publications, such as calendars of 'past and present' images of the city have been common and popular post-quake productions.

[70] Seno ed., with McCormick, *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, p. 82

lamp posts and other surfaces across the inner city, as if marking some event, provided the opportunity for reflection. The crosses, as simple markers, displayed no reference to a specific purpose, but in central Christchurch, the scale of change ensured they suggested multiple associations. In some cases, the marks appeared over swathes of paint covering graffiti, perhaps highlighting the palimpsest nature of urban surfaces, the erasure of some un-permissioned voice. Another possible reading is that each cross marks a site of individual memory, the recognition that some personally important event, no matter how inconsequential, occurred in that spot, an event that will always colour the experience of place for those present at that moment. The crosses, with their myriad potential readings, highlight the problems in ascribing meaning to anonymous interventions, their public appearance not necessarily a signal of an intended public reception. Similarly, the fluorescent markings of the rebuild, marking pipelines on the footpaths or areas to be excavated, provided a contrast. These noisy, functional and impersonal scrawls, like visual equivalents of the sounds of demolition and construction ringing throughout the central city, provided a very different presence from the quiet introspection suggested by the small crosses.

This potential attachment to personal memory was also available in a series of small, anonymous stickers found in various locations depicting a line drawing of an open hand, apparently wearing a wedding band, and wrapped at the wrist by a ribbon reading the word "Forever" **(Fig. 5.21)**. Whether the stickers were a specific memorial or tribute is unclear, but the sentiment encouraged reflection, especially in a landscape where the realisation of impermanence is obvious. The gesture of an outstretched hand appears to be one of warmth and support, but might also be one of loss, a loosened grip signifying separation and distance. Their recurring appearance in often obscured locations, ensured the stickers could be understood as gestures of remembrance and care, imbued with meaning due to the viewer's relationship to their place of discovery. In this way, the artist's original intent is clouded and usurped by the viewer's own experience, despite exhibiting a more accessible image than the black crosses.

On a corner of Cranmer Square, a significant intervention onto a damaged heritage building presented an interesting combination of personal and open associations, while also performing a type of memorialisation. Mike Hewson's *Homage to Lost Spaces* **(Figs. 5.22, 5.23)** was an explicit example of art that played on the quakes' impact on our memories of place, rather than serving as an overt memorial. Poet Jeffrey Paparoa Holman explained the compulsion to leave a trace of existence following the loss of so many "*aides memoires*" of the built environment.[71] It is the combination of loss of life and loss of a physical environment that truly brought the crisis the city faced to the surface.

[71] Holman, *Shaken Down 6.3*, p. 50

Ruminating on the impact of the fallen buildings, Holman continued: "…these structures were not only our external memory banks, they were also an internal geography, our shapes and roadmaps within. We would never be the same without them, but we could be healed if we saluted them and grieved for them."[72] Hewson's intervention was a public expression of loss and the personal experience of losing meaningful places. In April 2012, the boarded windows of the vacated neo-gothic Old Normal School building in Cranmer Square were adorned with enlarged colour photographs of various figures; in a shattered doorway a figure in a hard hat and hi-visibility neon vest was busy talking on a mobile phone, in another window a figure leapt over a desk. The images brought the doomed building to life, as if passers-by could see inside the building and witness new activity within its walls. Initially produced without permission, Hewson installed the printed images anonymously over the plywood boards that filled the windows and doorways of the well-known heritage building as a way of giving the old building a final burst of life.[73] The photographs, from Hewson's personal collection, documented his time in a studio in the Government Life Building, itself doomed to demolition, and featured various other artists who populated the converted office spaces. As such the images served as personal memories of a cherished time for the artist, a time abruptly interrupted by the earthquakes that damaged the Government Life Building. While celebrating a particular and significant aspect of Hewson's own experience, the placement of the works on the exterior of a building with a sense of civic significance and varied use (the building's name coming from its past as a training school for teachers in the early twentieth century), both briefly rejuvenated the Old Normal School before its eventual demolition, and also allowed the audience to draw their personal associations with the site through the reactivation.

The lack of knowledge about the (initially) unsigned and unexplained images, and the unexpected nature of their appearance, meant for many they were evocative of some memory of the building itself.[74] Hewson's initial guerrilla works led to a number of sanctioned and commissioned installations (including the permissioned completion of the Old Normal School installations), including *Deconstruction* (2013), which covered both sides of an air bridge across Colombo Street with a photograph of blue sky **(Fig. 5.24)**, the result of which effectively vanished the architectural form that loomed over the once busy main street. While these additional installations continued to draw on a

[72] Ibid.

[73] Uncredited, "Window Treatments", *Bunker Notes: The Christchurch Art Gallery Blog*, March 19, 2012, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2012/03/19/window-treatments/, accessed March 20, 2012

[74] One Saturday afternoon, watching Hewson complete the final, permissioned, installation for *Homage to Lost Spaces*, a stranger approached and recounted the music lessons he once took inside the Old Normal School building, a memory conjured by Hewson's images, encouraging engagement with the building and evoking memories of the role it had played in a personal history.

reflective connection to elements of the city, they were also at times loaded with personal significance, such as the Government Life building itself on Gloucester Street, where an inverted image of the building lined up with the actual building **(Fig. 5.25)**, creating the effect of the building hovering, suspended in time, encouraging consideration of our attachment to the constructed environment.[75] Other works replaced missing elements of damaged buildings, filling in space and tricking the eye of the viewer. In each case, the interventions allowed the audience to reconsider the built environment around them, to reconstruct it in the face of a trickster's alteration. Indeed, if the array of interventions by numerous artists across the inner city have afforded an engagement with the impact of the quakes in an ephemeral and immediate manner larger memorials might not have been able to produce, they have also importantly been entwined with a sense of presence within these spaces, revealing another telling role for these additions. While interventions such as Hewson's *Homage to Lost Spaces* made us aware of what was lost in the wake of the earthquakes, they were also importantly reflections of a presence within these spaces, of activity and reconstruction, albeit on different scales to the rebuilding going on around them.

Faces, phrases, bodies and names: Re-populating the inner city

By 2014 a sense of new normality was established in Christchurch's central city. The ubiquitous demolition and construction crews were joined by people re-populating offices, retail spaces, restaurants and cafés, creating pockets of activity amongst the empty zones and ongoing demolitions. Yet despite this returning presence, memories of the pre-quake inner city, such as teens hanging out in City Mall, or the busy nightlife of Oxford Terrace or Poplar Lane areas, were still distant. The city was still too filled with signs of damage and non-use to give the appearance of a fully functioning CBD. When the popular C1 Espresso re-opened in a new High Street location in late 2012, the café was celebrated as a symbol of the recovery and revitalisation of the central city.[76] But a tongue-in-cheek poster sold by the café highlighted the continuing perception of the state of the inner city **(Fig. 5.26)**. The poster featured a reproduction of a 1978 Christchurch City Council town planning map spanning a cross section of the central city overlaid in red text with the matter-of-fact declaration: "There's nothing to see here." The poster suggested the massive change brought upon the central city and the pervasive emptiness, from the demolished buildings to the lack of activity and human presence still marking large parts of the central city, even as businesses returned. The map, over three decades old,

[75] Charlie Gates, "Mural an artist's personal goodbye", *The Press*, Friday, January 25, 2013, p. A5
[76] Charlie Gates, "Through the looking glass for a flat white", December 21, 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/6158986/Through-the-looking-glass-for-a-flat-white, accessed November 9, 2014

depicted in detail the central city's pre-quake layout, and suggested the difficulty in reconciling the long familiar city of the past with the altered post-quake state. The recognisable buildings depicted in the map had been replaced in reality by the shells of unfamiliar stone and concrete or in many cases vacant lots. The poster rang true for many Christchurch residents who stayed away from the central city area they once knew, clinging to pre-quake memories and avoiding the changes that had been forced upon it.

The combined effects of the cordon, the newly unfamiliar surroundings, the signs of the earthquakes' ferocity, lingering fear or distrust of the built environment, and the perceived lack of functionality, left the central city sparsely populated in the wake of February 2011.[77] Even as the cordon was reduced and access became greater, an overwhelming sense of emptiness outside of pockets of the revamped urban core remained. Doors and windows of damaged buildings were sprayed with the fluorescent markings of USAR crews **(Fig. 5.27)**, symbols of the events of February 22, and the last "official" presence inside many of the damaged buildings before the red zone cordon was erected. Although the specific detail of such markings were not necessarily understood by the public at large, their presence was loaded with symbolism, fluorescent beacons marking broken grey walls and windows of empty shells, the outcome of searches throughout the post-quake landscape. American historian Douglas Brinkley noted how the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) markings that appeared around New Orleans post-Katrina, like the USAR markings in Christchurch, served a functional value, denoting the details and outcome of responders' searches, but also possessed an eerie symbolic quality, evoking biblical resonance:

> One thought of Exodus 12:7-13: "They shall take of the blood, and strike (it) on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses… And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye (are): and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy (you)." In a reversal of God's promise to protect, the symbols staining the door posts or walls of houses often meant death.[78]

In Christchurch, the USAR markings carried a similarly symbolic load. They remained on buildings long after they had been checked, reminders of the February quake. But another comparison could also be drawn, one that was more immediately visible than Brinkley's historical precedent. The USAR markings

[77] While working as a visitor host for an arts event in the central city in mid-2013, I was able to hold many informal conversations with a wide range of people, many who were visiting the inner city for the first time (a mix of Christchurch residents who had felt more comfortable staying away, and out-of-towners returning to the city for the first time in many years), common reflections were based on the scale of change, and the attempt to recollect specific places of personal significance. Others commented that there was no real reason to visit the CBD in its current state, as if waiting for the recovery process to be complete, despite the predictions that it may take many years.

[78] Douglas Brinkley, *The Great Deluge*, New York, William Morrow, 2006, pp. 604-605

would eventually be joined by a range of unsanctioned voices in the form graffiti writing **(Fig. 5.28)** . While equally indecipherable to the uninitiated, and despite lacking the authority of the USAR markings, these additions, in contrast to the clearance following the earthquake, were signifiers of a returned presence to the central city.

Graffiti writing has been a prominent and obvious sign of presence across the central city, from the top of high rise buildings to the plastic cable boxes dotting footpaths, and almost every space in between. Signature-based graffiti has always been related to the declaration of presence, what Waclawek notes as an assertion of the writer's identity[79], and Christchurch's central city has proven an interesting, attractive and opportune site for graffiti writers to explore and leave their trace on the exposed walls and empty buildings. The array of stylised names provide the evidence of a writer's presence, and of their fluid movement through the urban landscape, proclaiming their existence in the face of authority **(Figs. 5.29-5.34)**. The names written across Christchurch's central city have provided an ongoing urban discussion, a declaration that the city is contestable and that the numerous vacant spaces can be used and claimed by an uninvited presence.

As activity has returned, a range of initiatives have attempted to encourage and welcome people back to the central city in a very different manner to the urban inscriptions of graffiti writers. Yet even amongst (and in many cases pre-dating) these often well-publicised events and projects, a sense of physical and suggested presence has been provided by graffiti and street artists. Although it took time, people returned to the central city and while the re-emergence of a commercial presence has been a key part of the central city's recovery and repopulation, a spectrum of arts and cultural events and attractions have also played significant roles in enticing people back to the still unsettling surroundings of the CBD. Gap Filler's playful interventions have presented the opportunity for people to reactivate, explore and play in the city's empty lots. SCAPE 7's public art programme offered a range of interactive and participatory projects. FESTA, the annual Festival of Transitional Architecture brought the inner city to life in its first incarnation in 2012 with the illuminating *LuxCity* project, 2013's giant moving puppet show *The Canterbury Tales,* and 2014's 'takeover' of the Manchester and High Streets intersection, *City Ups*. The multi-disciplinary *Art Beat* combined a range of visual and performance art with live music (including graffiti art), and the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's *Populate!* and *Outer Spaces* projects have dotted the landscape with reminders of the Gallery's presence.[80] *Populate!*, which coincided with the Gallery's tenth birthday celebrations, was positioned as an attempt to return a sense of figurative presence to the central city through the addition of faces and

[79] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 13

[80] Many of these projects have become annual or established events, continuing to engage with the changing inner city setting as the recovery continues.

figures, in the form of both new works and reproductions of portraits from the Gallery's then inaccessible collection. While the *Outer Spaces* programme continued and developed a pre-existing public template into the testing post-quake circumstances, *Populate!* had the stated aim of filling the central city with a number of works of art in an attempt to add life and presence to the ever-changing environment. The programme included sculptural works such as Ronnie van Hout's *Comin' Down* (2013), an over-sized self-portrait sculpture pointing to the sky from the roof top of the old Post Office building on Tuam Street, and Gregor Kregar's shiny gnomes standing guard outside the closed Art Gallery building on Worcester Boulevard (*Reflective Lullaby* 2013). But two-dimensional portrait works were also a prominent part of *Populate!*, with the *Faces from the Collection*, reproductions of "treasured portraits" from the collection reintroduced to the public audience in new sizes and public settings, such as Elizabeth Kelly's *Margaret* (c.1936), Raymond McIntyre's *Suzette* (c.1914) and Michael Smither's *Portrait of my mother* (1972).[81] While the addition of these portraits attempted to transform the city into an outdoor gallery, their nature as pre-determined installations of reproductions served to position their presence as a reminder of the city's cultural heritage and the Gallery's role in providing art to the city rather than a reflection of an actual varied presence across the city (the pre-existing status of these works was highlighted by labels that identified the artist, title and date of specific examples). By contrast, the presence of graffiti and street art in their guerrilla examples, provide not just faces and figures, but the important trace of their creator and their response to the specific setting, not serving to encourage people back into the central city, but signifying the actual return of diverse human presence in the inner city's streets and altered spaces equally fitting in post-quake central Christchurch, where people have been slow to return.

While the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's "population" of the central city landscape has been relatively high profile, graffiti and street art have filled the inner city with figures, names and messages long before *Populate!,* symbols of an alternative to the "official" presence of art as a form of reactivation. The expressions, poses and movements of these various characters engage the unsuspecting audience, encouraging them to construct the stories and reasons for the appearance of these actors in the broken inner city **(Figs. 5.35-5.43)**. These personalities and their activities have ranged from menacing to mysterious, joyous to disinterested and stone-faced. While some have been preoccupied with the surrounding sights, others have apparently sought the attention of passers-by. Power's blank linear faces constructed in the fluid motion of a continuous line, transforming pre-existing patches of paint into faces, appeared surprised at being awoken; a tiny anonymous stencil of a giraffe grazing on a sprouting weed against a concrete wall on St Asaph Street seemingly oblivious

[81] Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, *Outer Spaces* flier, undated, unpaginated

to the surrounding activity; Piss's small rodent pasted to a piece of jutting brick work on Manchester Street, declared "Kill all the Humans and Save the Forests", perhaps suggesting nature's re-established control; Cinzah Seekayem's clown-like face on the apex of a building at the fringe of the central city; and a tiny wooden door crafted from modelling clay, suggesting some fantastical domicile within the urban setting of Cathedral Square, all provide examples of the varied occupation of the inner city **(Figs. 5.44-5.50)**. The changing appearance of the roving figure of Dr Suits (not a self-portrait but a character sharing the name of the artist), his attire and facial hair varied in each appearance, matching the changing state of the city, has provided a recurring presence, something of a modern day *flâneur* observing the city **(Figs. 5.51-5.53)**. His sartorial elegance (rarely seen without a bow-tie and dress suit), intended to represent the creative people of Christchurch and their contributions to the recovery, a stark contrast to the city's unofficial scruffy uniform of fluorescent vests, work boots and hard hats.[82] In New Regent Street, a stencil by the artist V of a crouching ninja **(Fig. 5.54)**, apparently ready to leap into action when necessary, suggested a covert presence with unclear motivations. On Madras Street, surrounded by damaged buildings and captured behind hurricane fencing, the razor-like fangs of a large, green, amorphous creature by Teeth on Madras Street **(Fig. 5.55)**, suggested a sense of horror lurking in these now empty spaces. These characters, even while occupied by their own activities, were able to draw in the viewer through curiosity. Each example illustrating a form of life and activity on the inner city's walls, many fleeting, disappearing in the manner of real human presence, but also offering a range of narratives to the viewers who stumbled upon them.

If the hundreds of characters and creatures have provided a figurative population of the central city, the suggestion of presence has also been evident in the visible text of notes, messages, jokes and questions that have been plastered across the city. From the top of buildings to lamp posts, hand rails and footpaths, phrases and observations have served as a kind of analogue social media; engaging, surprising, thoughtful and often humorous conversations that suggested presence in a different manner from the arguably more self-absorbed nature of graffiti, or the official and instructive civic management signs. These text-based interventions have created open, unofficial, and informal conversations between the artist/author and the largely unsuspecting audience, who are often engaged in the exchange in an unexpected moment. Contrasting with the official flow of information encountered in urban spaces, these snippets of dialogue have not intended to control, but instead reflect and combat the feelings of alienation often associated with the congestion of modern cities, a feeling still present in post-quake Christchurch despite the relative emptiness. The engagement with the stories and exclamations allow both reader and author to participate in a unique conversation

[82] Interview with artist, November, 2015

within the urban setting, creating a momentary connection. Such phrases, often in small forms that are noticed at closer range than many of the other examples of communication visible in urban landscapes, such as advertising and street signs, have presented ruminations that incite a moment of consideration, sometimes posing questions, other times making declarations: from an expressed dislike of the city ("Nothing works here, I hate this place…", "Desperate for an escape"), to the seemingly intimate admission: "The smiles I display are false, I'm lonely", or the more mysterious: "Then, all of a sudden, there was a knock on the door" **(Figs. 5.56-5.61)**. On the fringe of the central city, anonymously stencilled in white paint on a buckled footpath, a piece of prose referenced the impact of this change upon the central city and its residents **(Fig. 5.62)**. The unexpected phrase provided the viewer a surprising intervention, while connecting the experience of the inner city's changing physical landscape with a social and psychological impact:

On
Peterborough
Street the
houses are
wonky.
The ground
has been
pulled out
from
underneath
them.
The trick
worked and
the houses
stayed up,
but they are
wonky. If you
lived in them
you might
become
wonky too.

In a landscape dominated by signs of authority and control, such unexpected conversations have provided an alternative to the official flow of information, but have also initiated an engagement between people who may never meet.

Across all of these disparate examples, from the hieroglyphic stylisation of graffiti writing, to the figures, faces, and creatures, and the small snippets of written conversation, the relationship between the image, the artist and the audience is both apparent and important. Each one of these participants represents a form of presence in the spaces of the central city. The figurative images provide representations of presence, forms to directly consider as actors upon the physical landscape, but they also provide a reference to their creation at the hand of the now-invisible and often anonymous artist, encouraging a range of questions: Who? How? Why? But importantly the viewer plays a vital role in bringing the intervention to life and engages with the action of the artist through their own experiences and expectations, acknowledging the presence of the artist but also imbuing the works with their own associations and potential meanings. Waclawek has explained the intersection between the work, the street and the viewer, and the fleeting completion of a work of street art upon the surprising encounter of discovery between the viewer and the art object itself:

> The meeting point of art, place and person can be envisaged as its own space, something [artist] Swoon describes as "a moment of recognition, a wink from another human presence which is there but not there, like a little reflection of self embedded in the wall". The space of communication created by street art is accommodated by the work's interaction with other physical and visual elements, as well as its socio-cultural context. It is a performative space in the sense that the artist, the work, the viewer and the location all play a part: the artist through the process of diffusion, the work and viewer by virtue of reception, and the location by providing the site of confrontation on which the myriad performances of the piece are dependent. Directly linked to the everyday life of a city, these works propose powerful crossovers between the artist's expression and the viewer's experience of the urban environment.[83]

The 'wink' between two people, as Swoon suggests, is an important quality of informal, unsanctioned interventions, the viewer drawn into the motivations of the artist and a level of uncertainty that is often lacking in large scale projects. This connection was evident in a range of small stencilled stickers that appeared around the central city in 2013. Colourful dial-up telephones were stuck to the bottom of power boxes, lampposts and other objects **(Fig. 5.63)**, a suggestion of the potential communication between the artist Porta and the viewer who might have stumbled across the telephones. While the telephones, as two-dimensional images, had no ability to facilitate conversation, the question of a possible connection between two people was immediately available, even without any knowledge of who might speak back down the line. Even in examples that were not suggestive of a figurative or conversational engagement, the presence represented by these interventions was indicative of artists' exploration of the city, the occupation of and movement through spaces that had been rendered either unfamiliar or vacated in the wakes of the changes brought upon the inner city.

[83] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, pp. 97-98

An unfamiliar landscape: Graffiti, street art, navigation and exploration

In the midst of a gravelly lot, surrounded by cranes, utility trucks and construction workers in fluorescent vests and hard hats, an elegant ballerina rises, her arms clasped together and out-stretched, shoulders and collarbones defined by the evident strain, head bowed and wrapped in a headdress, her blue tutu splayed outward in a circular form **(Fig. 5.64)**. Her appearance an unexpected contrast to the pervasive feeling throughout the central city at that time, with grit more prominent than grace. The larger-than-life dancer occupies a huge wall overlooking an all-too-familiar scene from the post-earthquake central city. Rendered by Tauranga artist Owen Dippie's refined aerosol technique, the smooth flesh of the ballerina's limbs and undulating folds of her tutu present a sense of stark contrast to the noisy construction in the foreground. Painted in early 2014 as one of the *Rise* "Big Walls", Dippie explained that the dancer was in a "fallen pose about to rise. I think it's symbolic of the city because like the ballerina, the city has fallen and is about to rise into something beautiful."[84] But it is not just a contrast of fall and rise, of elegance and grit, of soft porcelain skin and rough terrain that marks the significance of the work. The sheer size of Dippie's ballerina, visible from a great distance, importantly provides a distraction from the ubiquitous presence of cranes and almost interchangeable partially-demolished buildings that have dominated the post-quake skyline since 2011.[85] The ability to mark places and routes by previous experience, memories and recognition of landmarks has been ruptured in Christchurch. The swathes of vacant spaces and buildings left unrecognisable as their surroundings have been completely altered, have eroded any sense of familiarity and left the central city a difficult place to navigate. The dancer provides a point of difference, serving as a landmark anchored to a specific place, a defining occupant by which a distinct part of the city can be recognised and other locations placed comparatively. Geographers Leslie King and Reginald Golledge describe landmarks by their ability to aid the navigation of a city: "*Landmarks* are the physical elements of the city that people use as reference points. In a sense, landmarks emphasize the special and the unique instead of the communal elements of urban areas."[86] Pre-quake Christchurch's gridded network of parallel streets ensured a relative ease of navigation, and while the ordered structure of this lay out remained post-quake, the loss of recognisable landmarks and the

[84] Eddie Zammit, "Owen Dippie: Profile", *No Cure Magazine*, Issue 9, 2015, p. 33

[85] When Dippie returned to Christchurch in 2014 for *Spectrum,* the follow up to *Rise*, he painted a herd of elephants walking amongst a background sea of graffiti near the damaged and exposed Odeon Theatre **(Appendix 1: Fig. A13)**, "highlighting the unstable environments that surround us." The city remained a fitting setting for such a commentary, damaged buildings still prominent in the inner city landscape. (Zammit, "Owen Dippie: Profile", *No Cure*, p. 33)

[86] King and Golledge, *Cities, Space, and Behaviour,* p. 242

numerous closed routes ensured navigation became a more difficult experience. A number of those returning to the city centre felt a strange feeling of alienation amongst the empty and inaccessible spaces. The ubiquity of the empty spaces and broken places in the post-quake setting resulted in an air of similarity, despite the intriguing details of these sights. This has been further exacerbated due to the loss of recognisable features that might have once been expected and relied upon to define these places. The "special and unique" quality of landmarks relies on a sense of contrast from the pervasive surroundings, the ability to stand out and provide recognition through difference. In post-quake central Christchurch, the pervasive damage and clearing of the built environment has necessitated the creation and recognition of new landmarks amongst the damaged and deconstructed surroundings. Dippie's large work, on the exposed rear wall of the recuperating Isaac Theatre Royal, serves as an example of the array of new landmarks that have populated and activated the transitional city and created unique reference points within the strange and constantly changing city, at least temporarily replacing the lost architectural heritage that long provided such markers of place.

In a setting where so much of the familiar built environment has been damaged, altered or lost, new landmarks, from architectural additions such as the Re:START container mall or the triangular form of the Transitional Cathedral, to large murals produced for the *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* events, such as Dippie's ballerina, Askew One's vibrant yet haunting dual portrait, *Kristen* (2013) floating in Cathedral Junction, and Lister's dashing, swooping seagulls on a huge exterior wall of a central city fitness centre **(Figs. 5.65, 5.66)**, have all been able to mark and define areas by providing unique reference points for people to acknowledge in a city that had become marked by emptiness and inactivity. These additions to the ever-changing post-quake city, and in particular the murals by graffiti and street artists, may not have the sense of permanence or embedded historical significance that had been attributed to many of the central city's pre-quake landmarks, but in their ephemeral nature have been more suitable for the transitional cityscape, where nothing is taken as fixed. Indeed, several of these notable additions have already disappeared as their architectural supports have been demolished, highlighting their entwined existence with the buildings on which they are painted, unlike sculptures that occupy separate space. Drypnz's crowd-surfing scene on Armagh Street **(Fig. 5.67)** and BMD's leaping foxes on Cashel Street, each produced in late 2013 as part of the graffiti and street art event *From the Ground Up*, had both vanished by mid-2014, with other works disappearing or obscured since, prey to the waves of change constantly sweeping through the city. In each case their erasure a reminder of the sense of flux still evident in the central city, and that the art that has been created has often reflected a contingent existence within this setting. The ability to reference the location of these works now disappeared, leaving the spaces where they stood once again undefined by any unique qualities. Even Dippie's ballerina, with its thematic connection to its host site, will have

to compete with the changing environment. Rebecca Macfie noted that Neil Cox, chief executive of the Isaac Theatre Royal, explained to her that "…a car park is destined for the empty plot in front [of the ballerina]… and he hopes it will be a low-rise structure that won't blot out the painting."[87] While large murals and wall paintings have provided the effective transformation and definition of the inner city's spaces without a sense of permanence, the smaller, unofficial, and often uninvited graffiti and street art interventions also found across the city have suggested a mobility and sense of exploration that has also suited the transitional landscape. These highly ephemeral forms are less concerned with marking specific places, and can be considered, to adapt a phrase by McCormick, as "not… landmark[s], but…remark[s]..."[88] In this more intimate nature, these interventions can be seen to suggest and encourage exploration and investigation as a way of acknowledging the changed appearance and altered use of inner city spaces, rather than purposeful navigation between places.

Graffiti and street art are unavoidably entwined with the movement through and exploration of cities, both as ephemera of presence, and often as signs of trespass, of uninvited access to spaces most people would never dare to tread. Even if their existence is out of view, their presence is an important reminder that there are peripheral and non-use spaces that are given life by such interventions. In Christchurch there has been an abundance of such spaces, empty buildings deemed dangerous and, as a result, useless. But for intrepid artists, such spaces provide an opportunity for transformation, even if these additions may never be witnessed by citizens unwilling to explore the city's peripheral and liminal spaces. Gastman and Neelon have explained the romantic notion of graffiti writing as deeply entwined with the act of exploration of urban space:

> The core of graffiti, and its greatest asset, will always be the power of a group of teenage best friends exploring their city as it reveals its mysteries. Their eyes open to a world that leaves them more curious and eager to learn than school ever has. They are rebelling against every force that tells them who to be and how to act- and having a total blast doing it, full of the innocent immortality of youth.[89]

This exploratory nature is exemplified in Schacter's *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti,* which includes a number of maps made by various artists of their home cities, illustrating the intrinsic sense of mobility amongst unsanctioned art made in public spaces and the perception of urban spaces through the eyes of street artists. The book includes a 2006 map of New York made by MOMO, an artist born in San Francisco but now residing in the East coast city. The map was the result of two nights spent traversing a pre-designed route around the city, and provides an explicit example of the

[87] By early 2016, Dippie's mural was almost completely obscured **(Appendix 1: Fig. A14)**. (Macfie, "Shock of the view", in *Once in a Lifetime*, p. 372)
[88] Seno, ed., with McCormick, *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, p. 83
[89] Gastman and Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, p. 31

connection between the production of graffiti and street art and the exploration of a city. Schacter describes how the artist affixed a bucket of paint to his bicycle, with a mechanism that slowly dispersed the paint as the artist rode, mapping his travel across the city:

> …The map can therefore be understood, just like every tag one encounters in the street, as a physical residue of a complex movement, denoting a past action, a past gesture. MOMO's map represents an experimental, innovative response to the world of graffiti, an artistic creation working on both microscopic and monumental scales. It can be regarded as a material deposit of an expedition, a map representing two nights as lived by the artist. It is a form of cartographic self-representation, a map of MOMO's passage from the East to Hudson Rivers, a clandestine, yet immense tag.[90]

MOMO's map was the visual documentation of a performance, the path taken by the artist drawn out in orange over a map of the city and shown in the flattened topography of Manhattan's gridded network of streets. The artist's name apparent in the unbroken line that both maps his path and results in the creation of an intervention into the urban space. But this is not mapping in the sense of defining and controlling, it is not the establishment of borders and limits, but the documentation of one's experience of a city through exploration. Alternative navigation and exploration methods that subvert the meanings of the city extend through urban activities from graffiti and street art, to urban exploration, parkour (free-running), and skateboarding. However, urban exploration, parkour and skateboarding, as primarily physical acts, are less about the actual imprint upon the city, and rather about a more immediate visual performance and effect. Skateboarding as a subversion of the accepted use and navigation of the city was the influence for Australian artist Shaun Gladwell's work *Inflected Forms* (2013), produced for SCAPE 7. Inspired by a YouTube video of skateboarders navigating the cracked streets of post-quake Christchurch, the grey geometric modernist sculptures-cum-skate ramps of *Inflected Forms* suggested the ways urban arts are deeply entwined with aspects of exploration and navigation.[91] Vera May, writing about Gladwell's work, noted how the YouTube video suggested the importance of the presence of bodies in urban spaces as "a kind of performance which activates the urban environment and gives ownership to occupants dealing with negotiation of the urban grid every day. In part this performance involves participation in public activity – a public performance that is the promenade of the city."[92] This sense of participation is often tied to the experience of practiced spaces, but in Christchurch's central city, it has in many ways been about the experience of a strange and unfamiliar space. May reasons that: "It can be argued that the first to

[90] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 34
[91] *Quaked – Skating in Christchurch After Earthquake*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2bvozq-KK8, accessed November 12, 2015
[92] May, "Quaked", in Blair French, ed., *SCAPE 7 Volume Two: Artist Projects*, Christchurch, SCAPE Public Art, 2013, p. 53

reclaim a city after experiences of radical material transformation are neither urban planners, bureaucrats or politicians (those officially tasked to make decisions around urban revival), but rather those who actively write the city beyond the confines of grids, paths and signs of urban decorum and regulation."[93] Graffiti and street art should be viewed in this regard as well, exploring the various spaces of the post-quake city and adorning the spaces in ways that suggest and mark exploration and renegotiation. Graffiti and street art can be viewed as performances, but the residue left behind, the art object itself, is a much more significant and intentional concern and design than the markings left behind by the wheels and metal trucks of a skateboard or the footprints of a free runner. In this regard, graffiti and street artists engage with an audience in a different manner and can encourage exploration and alternative paths even without the presence of the artist's body.

Graffiti and street art's intrinsic ephemerality has been suitable in the exaggerated sense of flux found in the post-quake central city, constantly providing fresh opportunities for artistic interventions within new and changing spaces. Manco has explained that the constant change of urban environments is a central element of graffiti and street art's existence: "Each day, fresh coats of paint and newly pasted posters appear overnight in cities around the world. In a process of perpetual renewal, new marks and artworks are layered over the fading ghosts of graffiti past and the decaying surfaces of the city."[94] In central Christchurch, the process of change has been even more extreme, not the necessary daily renewals of a functioning cityscape, but deconstruction and recovery from the ground up. In post-quake central Christchurch, the enlarged list of threats to graffiti and street art includes the demolition of buildings serving as the support for work, or the construction of new buildings filling vacant spaces. But this physical renewal also affords graffiti and street art regular reconsideration within a new context due to the constantly changing surroundings. This has made graffiti and street art an interesting and multi-layered aspect of the post-quake central city, changing with the evolving landscape and concerned less with a sense of permanence and more with a fleeting existence that activates the city's largely undefined spaces as sites to consider and explore.

The inability to navigate the central city from memory has been a notable experience for those returning to the Four Avenues. George Parker and Barnaby Bennett ruminated on the experience of the changed central city: "If you are, or were, familiar with the city, you may recognise the street names and intersections, but the places are completely changed. You stand there, staring, struggling desperately to remember, struggling to articulate meaning out of the uncanny familiarity."[95] Mapped views and aerial depictions have become common representations of the central city. Outlines of the

[93] Ibid., p. 53
[94] Manco, *Street Logos*, p. 7
[95] George Parker and Barnaby Bennett, "Introduction", in *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 4

red zone cordon, digitally modelled plans for the future city, and comparative shots of the past and present central city that highlighted the changed appearance, all presented a sense of distance and disconnection from daily life and routines. But such images were entirely different from the experience of navigating the city on foot amongst the damaged buildings and inaccessible routes, where the altered surroundings produced moments of confusion until some trigger afforded recognition, and ultimately a personal connection to place. Throughout the central city, the presence of fenced cordons, restricted access to areas and spaces, and constantly changing routes have forced travellers into unfamiliar places. Other sites have completely lost all signs and markers, leaving the potential to explore new and unfamiliar territories and spaces. The strange state of post-quake Christchurch has required a considered navigation and encouraged exploration. Paintings, stencils, stickers and paste-ups have captured the attention of viewers, in part due to the need to view the surrounding environment with an inquisitive eye, not just to take in the often surreal sights, but in an attempt to reconcile the altered city with previously familiar paths. Post-quake, the usual associations of the city centre with buildings, access routes and signs of life were largely unavailable, replaced with fences, determined routes of access, signs of controlled space and a cityscape in the process of being deconstructed to an unrecognisable state before being rebuilt. This left a confusing, unfamiliar scene to renegotiate, re-experience and recreate new paths that were distanced from the mental maps of one's past experiences of the inner city. Many of the familiar landmarks that made the parts of the city unique and special, both visually and internally, were gone, replaced by a repetitive patchwork of empty spaces and vacant buildings. The expected experience of the pre-quake city could not be relied upon in one's navigation, surprise and the unfamiliar were new constants, the in-built auto-pilot developed over years of experience required an update, or at least reconciliation through exploration.

A more aware approach has been necessary to navigate the incoherence of the central city. The one-way routes and empty lots that have rendered formerly known spaces alien require an awareness aided by the creation of these new large scale and unique landmarks, but also coloured by smaller interventions. It is within this state of awareness that smaller interventions into the urban landscape become more noticeable and can be used as suggestive points of reference or possible paths that might subvert the city's sense of control. The invitation to investigate the central city's varied spaces and changing nature has been evident in running characters attributed to Drypnz **(Figs. 5.68-5.70)**, or the incarnations of Dr Suits **(Fig. 5.71)** appearing throughout the central city. The faceless, silhouetted figures moved across the city like shadows caught mid-bound, both a suggestion of the artist's mobility throughout the city due to their repeated forms, but also the potential for the viewer to follow the lead of intrepid figures who traversed both the populated spaces of Re:START Mall and more peripheral spaces such as a brick utilities building in an empty lot in an industrial fringe area of the

central city. Similarly, the ever-changing appearances of Dr Suits on vacant walls provided a recognisable and recurring presence across the city, affording the audience to consider previous encounters with the well-dressed figure. Notably, the artist has explained that the character's eyes are always gazing to the right: "he has his eyes in the right direction", suggesting a sense of purpose to his roaming nature.[96] Stencils such as V's apparently anime inspired depictions of combative figures **(Fig. 5.72)**, also provide a recurring, recognisable, if unexplained presence. While in their method of reproduction, the repetitive act of spraying the image suggests the artist's ubiquitous presence across the city.

Throughout the central city, graffiti and street artists have made use of the unique characteristics of the city's physical structures to play upon the experience and exploration of the urban space. The fences and barriers that constructed the central city red zone cordon defined the ability to navigate the city, not only attempting to keep people out of areas of the central city, but also determining possible routes and affecting free movement. Christchurch artist Gaby Montejo's project *D fence* **(Fig. 5.73)**, created shortly after the February earthquake involved the installation of hand painted boards to the central city cordon fence. The artist reflected that the project addressed the post-disaster city:

> This was June, so 4 months after having the city closed off... our city ....everybody's city and as I reflect on that thinking that it was public space... our space and we did not have access to it I thought it appropriate to just put another sign up... to redirect traffic. To point to a signal of how things have changed...or where things are at the moment and so just using the means I had available at the time I hand-painted the signs.[97]

The boards were painted yellow with red lettering in a loosely crafted script, displaying a collection of words in Cuban native Montejo's Spanish tongue, each starting with the letter "D" and ranging from the fitting to seemingly unrelated. The handwritten signs were reflective of what Montejo described as the "haphazard gypsy living" and "improvised" approach many in the city were taking at the time.[98] Montejo acknowledged the selection of the words as aiming for universal recognition, and while the works' title alluded to civil defence, the repeated prefixes were vital:

> For me... how to make it understandable even to non-Spanish-speaking people the "de" of destruction means to remove or take away and so that was the right connection to our city being taken away so those words that I skimmed through the Spanish dictionary and found words that were relevant to what you might see you on the other side of the fence… that was it.[99]

[96] Interview with artist, November, 2015
[97] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[98] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[99] Interview with artist, May, 2012

The boards also included arrows that suggested possible routes and highlighted sights of interest, despite the presence of the cordon fence that restricted access across the city, protecting citizens from the dangers of the central city, but also creating a sense of confusion and unfamiliarity with the inner city. Over time as the cordon was policed and altered, Montejo's signs also became mobile, changing with the landscape, and adding new participants to the project. The way the project "could change over time and stay outside of my control" was a pleasing outcome for the artist and a fitting development within the context of the central city.[100]

Another playful example that utilised the cordon fences to suggest exploration and highlighted the sense of change across the central city was a tape art depiction of the popular 1980s video game *Pac Man* that appeared on Gloucester Street in 2012 **(Figure 5.74)**. In what might be considered a form of urban cross stitch, the titular character was chased by a group of ghosts, suggesting the playful opportunities in the city, re-staged as a platform game, while once again highlighting the presence of the cordon fences as objects designed to restrict movement. The flat surfaces of the fence providing the available pathway for both the video-game characters and the viewer. This transformation of the landscape into a surreal electronic world of flattened two dimensional characters against a real spatial backdrop was also evident in another tape work that apparently referenced the visual language of 80s platform video games. A colourful work of tape wrapped over several panels of fencing depicted a mushroom character signifying a reward of an extra playing life (a "1-up") next to the large word "HAPORI" **(Fig. 5.75)**. Although visually the word suggested a relationship to the arcade game theme, in Te Reo Māori, hapori refers to community, perhaps acknowledging the regeneration of the city through personal connections. In both the "Pac-Man" and "HAPORI" works, the association of the explorative nature of platform video games were an essential aspect in imparting the concept of exploration, but so too was the ubiquity and impact of the hurricane fences that framed so many parts of the inner city.

Other interventions were more subtle, but still suggested activation and exploration. A small stickered tentacle unfurled from the gravelly terrain on St Asaph Street **(Fig. 5.76)**, signifying some menacing presence, but still encouraging the investigation of an otherwise empty, unused and unattractive space. The appearance of small works amongst such spaces provides the opportunity to reconsider these areas as sites of surprise, curiosity and potential activation through exploration. Other works utilised a repeated presence across the city to suggest and encourage exploration and awareness, such as Montejo's *In Case Of…* project that extended from 2012 into 2013 **(Figs. 5.77, 5.78)**, where he encased a range of seemingly unnecessary objects in wooden boxes with clear plastic fronts, echoing

[100] Interview with artist, May, 2012

display cases to be cracked open in a moment of need. However, Montejo's objects were in most cases benign, generic, universal, playful and lacking the functional value one might hope for; from plastic costume jewellery to a car head rest, a pulp romance novel and in the first incarnation, a plastic brush and shovel (which despite providing more utilitarian clean-up value than the other items, still appeared futile in the midst of the dusty lot and the ongoing deconstruction and alteration of the city). Montejo explained the project began as:

> [A] little joke exaggerated by possibly maybe having someone empowered to take action at the face of a disaster such as a fire extinguisher or a CPR machine or an axe. I felt the most ridiculous way of addressing that would be to take it to an opposite extreme so I put silly little things inside of the glass case making it almost self-referential thinking somebody would make a mess by breaking the glass and then have to address the clean-up of the object just while around the city everything was purposely being destroyed by demolition companies and late night vandals so I thought that would be just fruit for the picking.[101]

The boxes were scattered throughout the city and as people connected their presence, a sense of discovery was evident, rewarding inspection of areas otherwise vacant. Montejo admitted that the placement of the boxes was based largely on convenience rather than context:

> I was just looking for any place that would be easy for me to bang a nail into and just hang the box it didn't really matter if it was prominent and visible or hidden I understood and I knew that things would get stolen and taken down so again the important matter with the materials was to keep it on the cheap… like a flower pot, a bunch of golf balls or a feather duster.[102]

Again, as with many repeated interventions, the discovery of Montejo's boxes provided a sense of recognition as a viewer traversed the city, compiling a list of the disparate objects as if drawn into some unexpected scavenger hunt.

While these examples have provided an accessible and visible sense of exploration, the city's many damaged and empty buildings have provided graffiti artists the chance to explore and occupy these out-of-sight spaces that have been relieved of their commercial or residential use. While graffiti writing was earlier juxtaposed with the USAR markings as visible signs of clearance and presence, it was not only on doorways and windows that graffiti writers marked their presence in such locations. The interior walls and rooftops of many of these buildings have been covered in layers of aerosol paint, with large, developed graffiti pieces often taking up whole walls, level after level of multi-storied

[101] Interview with artist, May, 2012
[102] Interview with artist, May, 2012

buildings turned in studio spaces for artists to explore and transform **(Figs. 5.79-5.83)**.[103] Yet, these colourful additions remain largely obscured, only revealed in glimpses through broken windows, or exposed when demolition begins and walls are removed (a popular technique that has become more visible at the time of writing, is the painting of windows, often in reverse to make the work legible to the outside audience. This has made the graffiti inside these empty buildings more apparent and public than the work still contained on the interior walls). If other interventions encouraged exploration and alternative paths throughout the city, the use of these "bandos" (a colloquial term for abandoned buildings), highlights a popular tactic for graffiti writers and street artists to make use of the liminal spaces afforded by urban environments, and an element particularly evident throughout post-quake central Christchurch (and mirrored in the suburbs by the empty homes of the residential red zone). These spaces, despite obvious dangers, provide sites where artists can spend more time on pieces, commandeering these floors of buildings as galleries that will likely never have a public audience. Waclawek has suggested that graffiti and street art practices demonstrate a willingness to utilise underused parts of the urban landscape:

> No matter how controlled city spaces are, they are also open to subversion. Not every area is monitored, commercialized, depersonalized or functionalized. Some spaces are unrestricted, unobstructed, exposed, empty, isolated, forgotten, unmanaged and bleak. Even within the capitalist economy of space, there are gaps or marginal spaces that, while often neglected, are necessary for the conceptualization of the city as a complex arena.[104]

In post-quake Christchurch such spaces are abundant and encourage exploration in the search for freedom amidst the city. While there is an element of risk in working in such spaces, and especially in the knowledge that few will ever see the works produced, the appearance of graffiti in and on buildings that serve no purpose and likely stand on borrowed time, suggests a willingness to explore and reclaim a city that has been altered and recast, making use of spaces that linger as a direct result of the impact of the quakes.

Conclusion

Christchurch's central city has provided a fitting site for graffiti and street art to play out a number of performances that have reinforced established tropes, but in doing so have illuminated the unique nature and potential of this post-disaster landscape. If the suburban examples of art in the streets

[103] Brittany Mann, "Graffiti reaches new heights in Christchurch CBD", July 26, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/70550028/Graffiti-reaches-new-heights-in-Christchurch-CBD, accessed June 1, 2015

[104] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 114

often attempted to present either community-centric acts of renewal or expressions of specific aspects of post-quake life in those areas, the inner city has been a more open site for artists to play out a range of ideas that reflect more traditional concerns and abilities. While graffiti and street art have long existed in the central city, its unique post-quake state has instilled these additions with a greater visibility within the emptiness and constant state of change. Perhaps the most physically interesting and widely discussed site of the post-quake city, the combination of the inner city's historic significance, the emotional impact of the quakes, the widespread and highly visible damage, and the constant change following the removal of the red zone cordon as it has undergone a drawn out deconstruction and rebuilding process, have all rendered this complicated urban space an attractive one for intrepid artists. From its immediate framing within the fenced cordon to a slow re-population as its spaces re-opened, the central city has been reconsidered as a site of memory, presence and exploration. These issues have in many cases been exposed by the addition of graffiti and street art, with artists and their work representing a multi-faceted presence that is further expanded and complicated by the presence of the audience and their reception of such interventions.

The transitional landscape has highlighted the significant changes across the inner city, and while official and informal memorials have provided specific reminders of the losses suffered in the February earthquake specifically, other street art interventions have been concerned with engaging moments of reflection upon more personal attachments to the changed environment. Small additions to the urban setting have presented both specific concerns of often anonymous artists, but also potential meanings for an audience based on their reception within the space they inhabit. As a result, street art in the post-quake central city has often engaged with memory rather than explicit memorialisation. If the sense of change across the central city rendered it a strange place to reconcile with past memories, the effects of the cordon and the sweeping deconstruction also served to de-populate a once bustling urban area. While a number of projects have attempted to render the inner city a more attractive space and to encourage people to return, the ephemera of graffiti and street artists have provided both a representational presence and the trace of occupation. The characters and bodies stencilled, painted and stuck to walls have been both signals of their creators' presence, but have also acted out their own stories or engaged conversation, suggesting a renewal of these often vacated spaces. This presence has also suggested the exploration of the inner city's altered and ultimately unfamiliar landscape. While larger projects, such as the Transitional Cathedral, or Owen Dippie's ballerina, have attempted to provide, albeit often temporary, landmarks by which people can navigate the inner city, the smaller interventions, suggestions of the free movement of artists, have invited exploration as a way of regaining a sense of these changing spaces, including the out-of-sight and

unused areas that had been largely ignored as shells devoid of function awaiting their erasure and replacement.

All of these discourses have revealed the way graffiti and street artists have utilised the inner city as a playground to explore and leave various traces of existence and presence, often imbued with the potential to trigger moments of engagement for an audience constantly renewing a connection to a location that has continually changed throughout its recovery. By utilising this space, and doing so largely without permission, graffiti and street artists have illustrated the ability of their work to engage with both audience and cityscape in surprising ways and without the scale, profile and permission of more notable public art projects. While graffiti and street at has continued to provide symbols of presence and exploration even as the central city has returned to a greater level of activity (even if the legacy of the quakes remain in ongoing demolition and damaged buildings), highlighting the central nature of these qualities, the ability of unsanctioned art to engage with critical discourses has been an important part of the post-quake setting. As the following chapter considers, the increasing presence of sanctioned graffiti and street art projects, in Christchurch specifically (although part of a wider global phenomenon), has questioned how these diversifying approaches, while often sharing the description of “street art”, are able to operate within this post-disaster setting, to alternatively regenerate and critique the recovering cityscape.

Figures:

Figure 5.1: Unknown artist, "Damaged", Victoria Street (photo February 2012)

Figure 5.2: Jeremy Sauzier, "HEAL", Barbadoes Street, central city (photo May 2013)

Figure 5.3: HIM, North New Brighton, 2012 (photo March 2012)

Figure 5.4: Band Aid Bandits, "Best Demo 2012", 2012, Victoria Street, central city (photo April 2012)

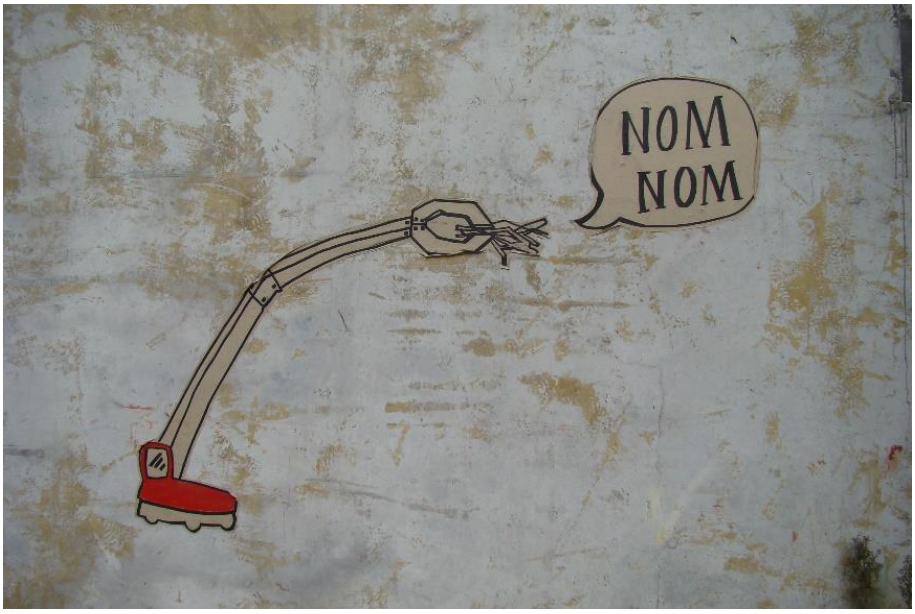

Figure 5.5: Band-Aid Bandits, “Nom Nom”, 2012, Peterborough Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.6: Unidentified artist, St Asaph Street, central city (photo June 2012)

Figure 5.7: Band-Aid Bandits, "What a Boo Boo", Manchester Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.8: Band-Aid Bandits, "I'll Kiss It Better", 2012, Knox Church, Bealey Avenue, central city (photo May 2012)

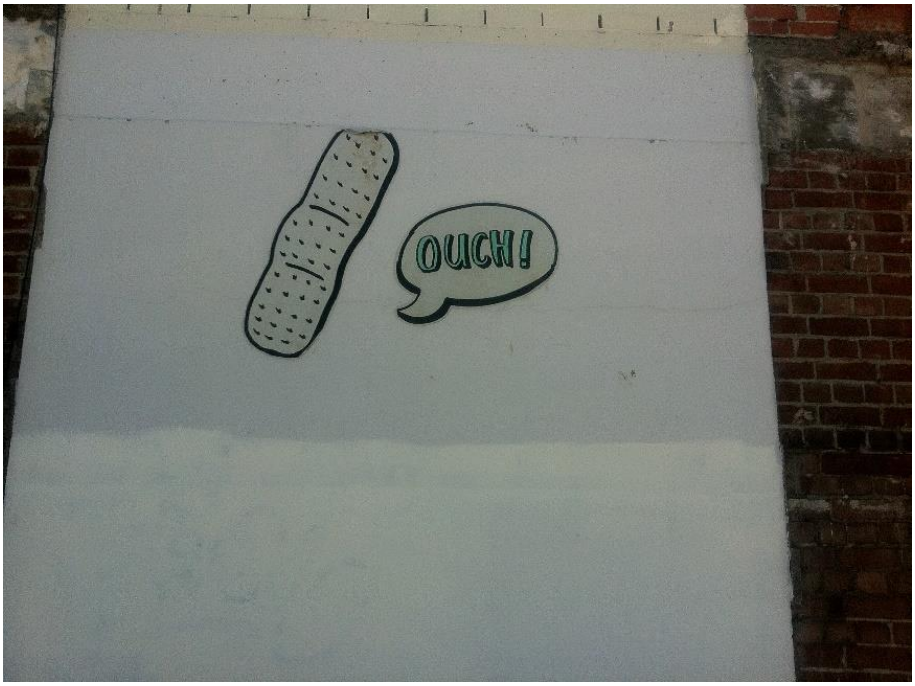

Figure 5.9*:* Band-Aid Bandits, “Ouch!”, 2012, St Asaph Street, central city (photo credit: Nathan Ingram)

Figure 5.10: Band-Aid Bandits, “I’ll Kiss It Better”, 2012, Manchester Street, central city (photo April 2012)

Figure 5.11: Unidentified artist, "Dedicated to those who past 22.02.11", 2014, City Mall, central city (photo February 2014)

Figure 5.12: Memorial flowers, Manchester Street, central city (photo February 2012)

Figure 5.13: Road Cone Tribute, New Brighton, 2016 (photo February 2016)

Figure 5.14: Peter and Joyce Majendie, *185 Chairs*, 2012, Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, Oxford Terrace, central city (photo March 2012)

Figure 5.15: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus, Jacob Yikes, Lurq, Zes, Senor and unidentified artist, Christchurch earthquake memorial, 2011, Riccarton (photo March 2016)

Figure 5.16: Jot tribute, a memorial to a deceased graffiti artist on Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2014)

Figure 5.17: Unidentified artist, "Gone But Never Forgotten", Rolleston (photo March 2013)

Figure 5.18: Mike Hewson, *View from the Studio*, 2012, City Mall, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.19: Jeremy Sauzier, "HOME", Manchester Street, central city (photo May 2013)

Figure 5.20: Charles Poynton, High Street, central city (photo February 2012)

Figure 5.21: Unknown artist, “Forever”, City Mall, central city (photo April 2012)

Figure 5.22: Mike Hewson, *Homage to Lost Spaces* (detail), 2012, Old Normal School, Cranmer Square, central city (photo March 2012)

Figure 5.23: Mike Hewson, *Homage to Lost Spaces* (detail), 2012, Old Normal School, Cranmer Square, central city (photo June 2012)

Figure 5.24: Mike Hewson, *Deconstruction*, 2013, Colombo Street (Left: South face; Right: North Face), central city (photos April 2013)

Figure 5.25: Mike Hewson, *Government Life Suspension*, 2013, Gloucester Street, central city (photo February 2013)

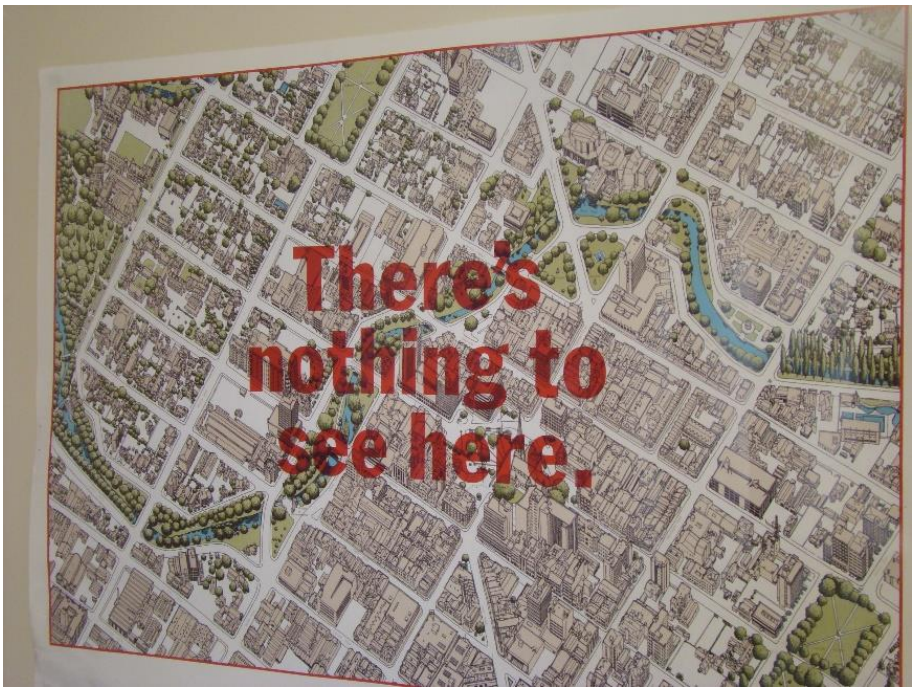

Figure 5.26: C1 Café poster, "There's nothing to see here"

Figure 5.27: USAR markings, various central city locations

Figure 5.28: Deter tag over USAR marking, central city (photo February 2012)

Figure 5.29: IMK, Colombo Street, central city (photo January 2013)

Figure 5.30: BC, Cashel Street, central city (photo April 2014)

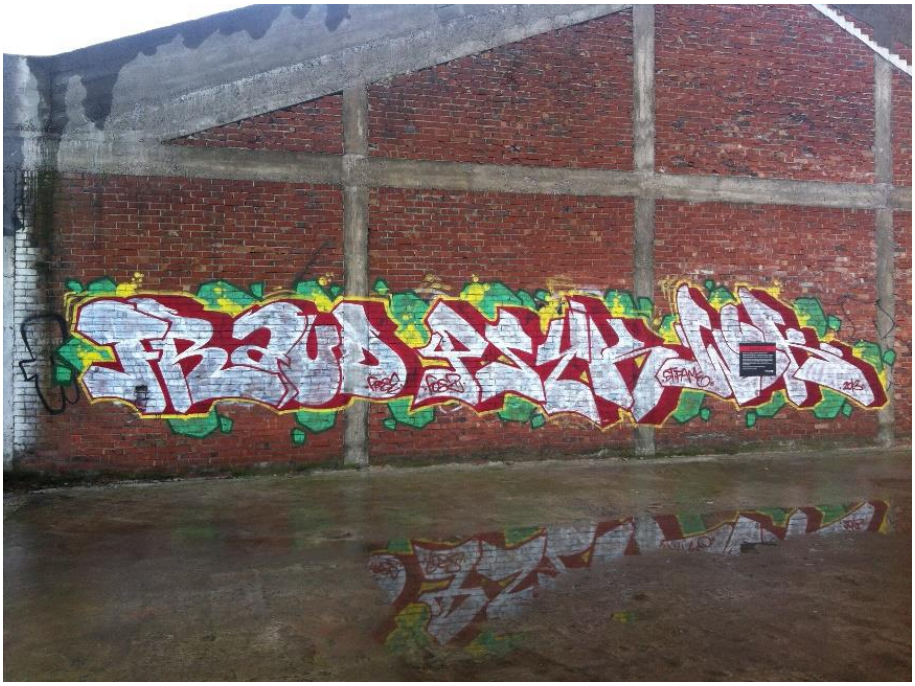

Figure 5.31: Fraud, Psyk and Wek, St Asaph Street, central city (photo May 2013)

Figure 5.32: Sulk, Cashel Street, central city (photo July 2012)

Figure 5.33: MO!, Gloucester Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 5:34: JFK, Welles Street, central city (photo February 2014)

Figure 5.35: Unidentified artist, St Asaph Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.36: Jen, Madras Street, central city (photo January 2013)

Figure 5.37: Unknown artist, St Asaph Street, central city (photo April 2012)

Figure 5.38: Mark Catley, Manchester Street, central city (photo April 2013)

Figure 5.39: Teeth, New Regent Street, central city (photo July 2014)

Figure 5.40: Ghøstie sticker, central city (photo March 2013)

Figure 5.41: TenTwo, New Regent Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 5.42: Unidentified artist, Worcester Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 5.43: Unidentified artist, Tuam Street, central city (photo August 2012)

Figure 5.44: Power, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 5.45: Power, with Kill tags, Armagh Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 5.46: Power, central city (photo August 2013)

Figure 5.47: Cinzah Seekayem, 2012 Wicked Campers building, Ferry Road, central city (photo September 2012)

Figure 5.48: Unknown artist, Cathedral Junction, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.49: Piss, "Kill the Humans and Save the Forests", Manchester Street, central city (photo June 2012)

Figure 5.50: Unidentified artist, St Asaph Street, central city (photo July 2012)

Figure 5.51: Dr Suits, Madras Street, central city (photo January 2013)

Figure 5.52: Dr Suits, Cashel Street, central city (photo credit: Nathan Ingram)

Figure 5.53: Dr Suits (right), Mike Hewson (left), Victoria Street (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.54: V, New Regent Street, central city (photo October 2013)

Figure 5.55: Teeth, Madras Street, central city (photo September 2012)

Figure 5.56: Unidentified artist, "Then, all of a sudden, there was a knock at the door", Worcester Boulevard, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 5.57: Unidentified artist, "Whenever you hear the word inevitable, watch out! An enemy of humanity has identified himself", Worcester Boulevard, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 5.58: Unidentified artist, "Desperate for an escape..", central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 5.59: Unidentified artist, "Were comes the sadness once again", Colombo Street, central city (photo February 2014

Figure 5.60: Unidentified artist, "Nothing works here, I hate this place…", Colombo Street, central city (photo October 2013)

Figure 5.61: Unidentified artist, "Cut it High Priest cut it!", Cashel Street, central city (photo March 2014)

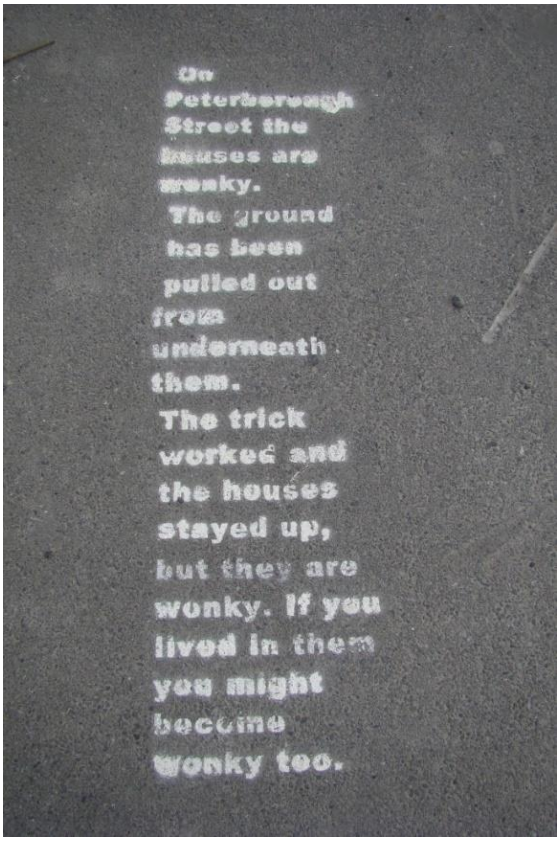

Figure 5.62: Unidentified artist, "On Peterborough Street the houses are wonky…", Peterborough Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.63: Porta, City Mall (left), Durham Street (right), central city (photos December 2013)

Figure 5.64: Owen Dippie, *Ballerina*, 2013, rear of Isaac Theatre Royal, Gloucester Street (photo April 2014)

Figure 5.65: Askew One, *Kristen*, 2013, Cathedral Junction, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 5.66: Lister, 2013 Liverpool Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.67: Drypnz, 2013, Armagh Street, central city, 2013 (photo January 2014)

Figure 5.68: Drypnz (attributed), Wilmer Street, central city (photo February 2013)

Figure 5.69: Drypnz (attributed), Wilmer Street, central city (photo February 2013)

Figure 5.70: Drypnz (attributed), Re:START Mall carpark, central city (photo February 2013)

Figure 5.71: Dr Suits, St Asaph Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.72: V, various stencils, various central city locations (all photos 2013)

Figure 5.73: Gaby Montejo, *Dfence* (one of multiple components), 2011, Colombo Street, central city (photo May 2012)

Figure 5.74: Unidentified artist, Gloucester Street (photo October 2012)

Figure 5.75: Unknown artist, "HAPORI", Madras Street, central city (photo October 2012)

Figure 5.76: Unidentified artist, St Asaph Street, central city (photo July 2012)

Figure 5.77: Gaby Montejo, *In Case Of,* Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2013)

Figure 5.78: Gaby Montejo, *In Case Of*, carious central city locations (photos 2013-2014)

Figure 5.79: Deflo, Tuam Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.80: Crimis, Hereford Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.81: Interior of partially demolished building, revealing various pieces of graffiti, Hereford Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.82: Various pieces of graffiti, inside and outside of vacated building, Hereford Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 5.83: Various pieces of graffiti, inside and outside of vacated building, Lichfield Street, central city (photo January 2016)

5: The city is ours: Sanctioned and unsanctioned graffiti and street art in post-earthquake Christchurch

"It isn't meaningless to capture walls."[1]

- **French artist JR**

"The best street art is illegal"[2]

- **Curator Cedar Lewisohn**

"This exhibition will profile the very best of street art, a recognised genre celebrated worldwide…"[3]

- **Anthony Wright, Director of the Canterbury Museum**

Introduction: "You can tag but we can't"

Two stencilled images that appeared in Christchurch's post-quake landscape provide an example of the fraught evolution of contemporary graffiti and street art. Spray painted directly onto city walls, the images may have appeared as guerrilla interventions, but in fact they were commissioned by the New Zealand Police as an attempt to harness the symbolic associations of street art. Auckland artist Otis Frizzell was employed to stencil a range of images on city walls around the country as part of a Police recruitment campaign in 2011, including two quake-related images in Christchurch.[4] Frizzell's

[1] *Inside Out: The People's Art Project*, dir. Alistair Siddons, Social Animals, 2013
[2] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 127
[3] Charlie Gates, "Banksy street art features in festival", *The Press*, Tuesday, September 24, 2013, p. A3
[4] The images were also used in a television advertising campaign, avoiding the issues around such ephemeral forms and reaching a wider audience.

Christchurch images depicted stories specific to their locations, notable sites of the February earthquake's impact. On Montreal Street, Officer Spence Kingi was depicted pulling a survivor clear from a pile of rubble, while on Kilmore Street, Constable Nao Yoshimizu (Yoshi) comforted a distraught woman with an embrace. Frizzell's stencils were described by *The Press* as "Street art depicting the heroic actions of Christchurch police…", and while it was noted that they were part of a police recruitment campaign, their existence as a marketing campaign was seemingly secondary to their identification as "street art".[5] Their designation as "street art" illustrated the problematic use and expanded applications of the term. In blurring the lines between advertising and illicit art, Frizzell's stencils suggested what Heagney has described as a "kind of aesthetic feedback loop", where movements that began by subverting and challenging advertising and corporate branding are now appropriated and influence marketing "in ways that we are only beginning to understand in cultural terms."[6] The use of the stencil technique was an important aspect in the works' reception. As Heagney has noted, stencils have traditionally drawn from "the techniques of corporate communications to question political corruption, crime and class economics."[7] Unsurprisingly, along with criticism and ridicule in social media, Frizzell's images were met with a visual backlash. The *Yoshi* stencil on Kilmore Street was annotated with the message: "You can tag but we can't" **(Fig. 6.1)**, highlighting the perceived hypocrisy of the campaign. Such responses were expected by Frizzell, who recognised graffiti and street art's outsider nature: "…[A] lot of people who entertain themselves with street activities have a hair up their arse about the police. The campaign tried to appeal to a new, more edgy, educated, interested, more diverse crowd of people as recruits. People do respond to street art. So it felt like a way to get through."[8] The episode suggested the recognition of street art as an attractive, malleable tool for advertisers and authorities to present a sense of urban cool, a stark contrast to their perception as subversive and rebellious challenges to establishment. For many this development has rendered street art stripped of some of its power as a critique of authority. In Christchurch, this complicated status has been evident in both the unsanctioned interventions that have critiqued aspects of the city's recovery, and the increasingly notable presence of sanctioned murals that have helped re-shape the city's appearance.

As the city's rebuild has progressed, Christchurch has been filled with contrasts; vacant spaces amidst zones of activity; still broken buildings juxtaposed with rising new constructions; official, authorised

[5] Uncredited, "Cop art pops up in city", http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/5287612/Cop-art-pops-up-in-city, accessed September 9, 2014
[6] Heagney, "The Rise (and Fall) of Street Stencils", in *Space Invaders*, p. 76
[7] Ibid., p. 75
[8] Hayley Hannan, "Taggers hit police street art campaign", July 20, 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10739544, accessed September 15, 2014

voices opposed by rebellious, subversive and dissenting interventions. The drawn out recovery has exposed the diverse incarnations of contemporary graffiti and street art. Notably, the art populating the city has ranged from interventions which by-passed permission, to sanctioned projects that have suggested both active renewal and the subtle re-establishment of control in a contested setting. This variety has, in part, highlighted graffiti and street art's rapidly diversifying nature. As reflections of and challenges to the controlled and commercialised settings in which they are produced, graffiti and street art have historically existed outside of the art market and in opposition to the official aspects of our visual landscapes. As Waclawek explains, regardless of the specific intent of the artist, making art in the streets without permission provides a form of "resistance to sanctioned imagery and the notion of public space".[9] However graffiti and street art have undergone significant changes through the new millennium, resulting in a more complex position within our physical surroundings and popular consciousness. They have been co-opted and mutated, and artists more celebrated, resulting in a significant sanctioned presence globally. Commercial commissions, gallery exposure, the growing contemporary mural movement, and the rise of urban art festivals all pose questions around the nature and meaning of graffiti and street art's multifaceted public existence. No longer uniquely signs of dissension, transgression and subversion, these new incarnations of graffiti and street art are increasingly prominent symbols of cultural capital, providing financial and civic benefits to cities that might have traditionally opposed their existence.[10]

This complicated territory has understandably drawn comment from artists. A Detroit wall painting by American artist Sever, *Street Art is Dead* (2012), explicitly referenced this changing nature. The work depicted a coffin marked "Street Art" being carried by iconic characters of some of the most recognisable and innovative artists of the movement.[11] In a 2015 interview, while asserting that the work was not a chastisement of the artists, whom he credited as "the Mount Rushmore of the culture", Sever revealed he was inspired by the increasingly commercialised status of street art:

> I like a nice refreshing street art Perrier while I watch *Street Art Throwdown* as much as the next guy, but sometimes it all becomes a little much, don't you think? I think at one time illegal art in the streets was this genuinely disruptive, shocking thing, or whatever, but it's been absorbed so deeply into the mainstream for so long now that it's just been left defanged, declawed. Its cool, youthful, rebellious spirit now sells condos and Hot Pockets. It's hard to watch and I think the piece was born out of that.[12]

[9] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 73

[10] It is common to see travel writing include photographs of graffiti and street art in an attempt to reflect a cultural point of attraction for tourists.

[11] The iconic characters of artists Os Gemeos, Banksy, Shepard Fairey, Kaws, Twist and Futura represented the artists themselves, from Os Gemeos' yellow skinned boy to Fairey's depiction of Andre the Giant.

[12] Austin McManus, "Sever", *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.117, October 2015, p. 76

This evolving position, and newfound public popularity, has led Alison Young to highlight how "street artists exist in a space of great contradiction."[13] Indeed, the likes of Shepard Fairey travel the world creating massive public murals, but still face prosecution for illegally produced work.[14] Fairey explained in his 2015 book *Covert to Overt* that this approach is an important aspect of his work:

> I have worked with city governments and been arrested by them… I've long embraced what I call the 'inside/outside strategy' of doing things on my own terms outside of the system when necessary, while also seizing opportunities to infiltrate the system and use its machinery to spread my art and ideas, hoping to change the system for the better in the process.[15]

This dichotomy is exacerbated by the higher profile and recognition attained by artists increasing the risk of being caught (in the digital age, an artist's street work might be captured, posted and disseminated around the world within minutes, providing greater exposure and a sense of preservation). Artists are presented with numerous opportunities for highly visible legal and commercial projects, but many still feel and understand the excitement and importance of producing unsanctioned work. This contrast is not only an issue for artists, but also reflects the contradictions of the urban spaces graffiti and street art occupy, where sanctioned works are celebrated, while illegal works are actively chastised and eradicated. Indeed, post-quake Christchurch has presented the opportunity to consider these divergent approaches as indicative of the issues apparent in this landscape, from an urgent need to communicate, contest and critique, to a desire to re-establish the city as a vibrant, attractive, creative destination, all amidst the changing recognition of the contribution of graffiti and street to the recovering cityscape.

The broken post-quake setting has blurred the issues of legality and perceptions of public nuisance. Blair French, the curator of SCAPE 7, has noted the complexities of public space in post-earthquake Christchurch as "simultaneously a site of extreme regulation, open-ended possibility and continued risk."[16] Not only have the barren lots, exposed walls and unused buildings invited intervention and re-activation, the pervasive signs of control and determination amidst an already politicised environment have invited the opportunity to challenge authority and voice frustrations. Highlighting the regulation

---

[13] Alison Young, "Legal/Illegal: Street Art in Australia", in *Space Invaders*, 2010, p. 63

[14] Ryan Felton, "Shepard Fairey vandalism case 'disappoints' Detroit arts community", *The Guardian*, Friday, October 9, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/09/detroit-shepard-fairey-vandalism-case-arts-community, accessed November 3, 2015. Closer to home, Australian artist Anthony Lister (who participated in Christchurch's *Rise* event in 2013) has faced prosecution on graffiti vandalism charges in his home town of Brisbane, while his sanctioned wall paintings are celebrated and his studio work exhibited in notable galleries around the world. (Kay Dibben, "Renowned Brisbane artist Anthony Lister charged with graffiti", November 9, 2014, http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/renowned-brisbane-artist-anthony-lister-charged-with-graffiti/story-fnihsrf2-1227117083290, accessed November 10, 2015)

[15] Fairey, *Covert to Overt*, p. 13

[16] French, "Introduction", in *SCAPE 7 Volume Two: Artist Projects*, pp. 10-12

of the post-quake city, Ryan Reynolds has considered Christchurch indicative of "a culture of permits, where we seem to assume, and even accept, that anything a bit out of the ordinary is forbidden, unless we get special permission, and we internalise this so much that we close ourselves off to all sorts of possibilities."[17] While Reynolds' sentiment may hold true for those conditioned to obey, there have been countless guerrilla artists who, following in anti-authority and anti-institutional traditions, have viewed the recovering city as a perfect location to question the construction of public space and produce alternatives to the "official" aspects of recovery. While not all street art is explicitly political or socially-concerned, it is unavoidably entangled with the political and social meanings of public space. Trespass, or the act of "going too far" as McCormick describes it[18], has been an inviting proposition in a city filled with opportunities for creative interventions and subversive transformations that seem less villainous in an already disrupted landscape, where the earthquakes might be viewed as the primary vandals from which to wrestle back a sense of control.

This chapter refers to the distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned work, the use of these terms suggesting a specific interpretation of the state of post-quake Christchurch. The terms sanctioned, legal, permissioned and commissioned are often employed interchangeably, yet there are important distinctions with regards to some of these concepts, especially within the specific local setting. The antonyms "sanctioned" and "unsanctioned" (and at times "permissioned" and "un-permissioned") are employed in preference to "legal" and "illegal" and "commissioned" and "un-commissioned". The sanctioning of a work reflects the granting of express permission or approval. This interpretation does not specifically imply that the work is dictated in terms of content, appearance and theme, as "commissioned" might imply, but does suggest an agreement upon these aspects by the authorising power, even if such an impact is implicit in this type of relationship. This is often evident in conditional approval, or an endorsement of the production, and is complicit in the work's enduring presence. It is important to note the underlying associations and meanings of some of the alternative terms: "illegal" refers to a more specific transgression in breaking the law, while "commissioned" denotes a specific dynamic between the agent and the artist, an agreement for a work usually with certain pre-determined qualities. Many post-quake projects have been realised due to the persistence of the artist and produced without any agreed outcomes, artists have actively sought opportunities to create work in public spaces rather than responding to an expressed need by a property owner or civic authority (although such commissions have occurred). It is therefore clear that the distinctions between these approaches is complicated by the post-quake landscape, and

[17] Ryan Reynolds, "The Adolescent City", a talk delivered at TEDxEQChCh, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGYF7nG0UsQ, accessed October 21, 2012

[18] Carlo McCormick, "Where Angels Dare to Tread", in *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, p. 15

further so by the abundance of empty buildings and absentee owners, creating a number of potential sites for artists to work with or without permission. While previous chapters have also dealt with unsanctioned work across the city, this chapter, while building on these examples, is more focussed on the way these forms engage with the post-quake city in more critical ways, from the politics of the recovery to more general discourses of rebellion and transgression. These aspects are more marked in creating a dichotomy with the performance of the sanctioned works included here, rather than the relatively immediate responses evident in the suburban and central city chapters.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the various ways unsanctioned graffiti and street art has engaged with the post-quake setting to create a range of discourses surrounding the physical, social and political issues of the city. Building on previous discussions, this reveals the way the city's changing nature has facilitated different approaches to the production and meaning of unsanctioned art. The Canterbury Museum presents an unlikely site for the discussion's progression. But it is inside this institution that graffiti and street art's evolution can be investigated within both local and global contexts. The *Rise* exhibition opened in late 2013, almost three years following the major earthquakes, as a celebration of graffiti and street art. It was inevitably entangled with the affected landscape still outside the museum, which revealed a number of issues regarding the varied presence of these forms. The public space component of *Rise* and the concurrent, independent festival *From the Ground Up*, provide case studies that connect to the global network of graffiti and street art festivals, but also the consideration of the sanctioned presence of these forms across the post-quake city. While these events positioned graffiti and street art as permissioned public participants in the city's recovery, they also present the opportunity to consider the very different roles such large scale murals play from smaller unsanctioned interventions into the post-quake landscape, both formally and ideologically.

While Frizzell's police stencils may have been different in appearance to the many large-scale murals that have adorned the city's walls, they might be seen as a signpost of the role graffiti and street artists would come to play in the post-quake period. Frizzell's works raised the local context of a post-disaster city as a site of recovery, control and opportunity. In post-quake Christchurch, the term "street art" has been applied to a diverse range of work, by commentators ranging from social media to published texts, clouding how such work might engage with the cityscape. Indeed amongst the headline-grabbing sanctioned projects, thousands of unsanctioned interventions have served as reminders of the evident opportunities, the numerous contributors to the visual discourse, the underlying political

nature of the post-quake environment, and the un-censored potential and inherent meanings of by-passing permission and making art in the streets.[19]

Everything is broken: Unsanctioned graffiti and street art in post-quake Christchurch

In August 2013, a large brick wall overlooking a vacant lot on St Asaph Street was painted with the apparently defiant and inflammatory declaration: "THIS WALL CAN'T TALK" **(Fig. 6.2)**. The work was a mural by Christchurch artist Rob Hood, one of three works commissioned by the Christchurch City Council and the Ministry of Justice in an attempt to deter graffiti tagging in the central city (which itself signifies an attempt to restore order to the recovering inner city).[20] The murals drew on the (perhaps problematic) perception that uninvited urban artists and vandals often give more respect to artistic additions than to blank walls. However in the case of Hood's mural, the artist also raised an issue at the heart of graffiti and street art's existence: the streets as a site of open expression and communication. The simple, bold design of the black block letters on a white background, with words of various sizes stacked up and across the wall, imbued the work with a sense of ordered, confident, clearly enunciated authority. The design also provided a stark contrast to both the bright colours and striking techniques of many of the murals around the city, and more directly, the unsanctioned graffiti on the exposed brick wall and row of shipping containers across the empty lot **(Fig. 6.3)**. Although engaged in a noisy sub-cultural conversation between absent figures, these voices immediately joined the discourse created by Hood's black and white mural.[21] Yet, if Hood's mural appeared blunter than the noisy graffiti, it was also apparently laced with the artist's sense of humour, and despite its proclamation, it essentially invited conflicting evidence to appear. Hood explained that the work was a result of his contemplation of "how we imbue artworks with meaning and they take on a meaning of their own. And that history of how we give meaning to inanimate objects."[22] Yet inevitably, the work was also engaging in a discourse around the use of public space, illustrating, intentionally or not,

[19] As well as the "New Cops" stencils, guerrilla advertising has been a common ploy; including the paste ups of apparel company ALC appearing at various locations across the city **(Appendix 1: Fig. A15)**. The paste ups were largely devoid of direct reference to the clothing they attempted to sell and more an attempt at branding within a specific demographic.

[20] The other murals commissioned under the tagging deterrent scheme were Kate McIntyre's grey wildlife scene on Colombo Street, and Cristina Silaghi's abstracted landscape on Durham Street, which was destroyed in early 2014.

[21] Hood was equally absent, and his identity was not a visible element of the work, available through media coverage rather than in any provenance on the wall.

[22] Charlie Gates, "City murals seen as tagger deterrent", January 30, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/city-centre/9664713/City-murals-seen-as-tagger-deterrent, accessed September 16, 2014

that if walls themselves cannot talk, they are physical forms that can be utilised as social forums for discourses both public and intimate.

Hood's taunting mural invited responses, and it got them.[23] Over time the work inevitably and expectedly became the target of dissenting voices; graffiti tags and retorts such as 'Yes it can' repeatedly scrawled on the white surface in disagreement with the imposing text **(Fig. 6.4)**. Tellingly, the comparative sizes of the mural's bold text and the smaller hand-written protestations suggested the divide between official and uninvited communication. Yet in its bold declaration, the work was not immediately apparent as authorised by the Ministry of Justice and the Christchurch City Council, placing the work, and the artist's intentions, in a strange place between deterring and encouraging uninvited additions. Such comments were regularly painted out before new retorts reappeared, the very nature of the work created an ongoing conversation. The additions served as less noisy counterpoints to Hood's apparently authoritative declaration, but also as affirmations of the ability of public space to be used by any participant willing to break the rules. Schacter has explained that "…the act of writing upon walls (also known as parietal writing) is an equally ubiquitous and elemental act, one linked to the primal human desire to decorate, adorn and physically shape the material environment."[24] While such evolutionary theory might be somewhat problematic, marginalising the context of our relationship to the physical and social spaces we have created in favour of more "primal urges", it does suggest the attraction of the act. It is not just the physical surface, but the symbolic and functional qualities of walls that ensures their use as public forums is made most meaningful. As functional objects before they are adopted by artists and anonymous interventionists, walls are signifiers of divided space and defined boundaries and as such suggest exclusion and control. Fabienne Grévy, writing about Parisian graffiti and street art, notes that a wall is "an object of protection, property, and isolation", but with the addition of scrawls and images can become "the vector of a new form of expression".[25]

Sanctioned public art is inevitably constructed within a city's networks of control and ownership and reflects the approval of those with authority. When graffiti or street art is produced without permission, it intrinsically challenges the underlying social, economic and political relationships at work in an urban environment. Waclawek notes that unsanctioned graffiti and street art function as reminders of "free thought, free expression and individuality in networks of conformity", and as such question public space and the official and accepted features of the urban landscape that command

[23] Whereas Frizzell's police stencils blurred the lines of recognition, Hood's mural can be understood as a bold attempt to create a public discourse.
[24] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 9
[25] Fabienne Grévy, *Graffiti Paris*, New York, Abrams, 2008, p. 3

order and acceptance.[26] In creating this opposition, as McCormick has explained, an unsanctioned creation instantly imbues an art work with a sense of anti-authoritarian meaning: "Any gesture that has not been granted permission and yet commands public address- be it activist or avant-garde, mischief, vandalism, or fine art- needs to be understood primarily as a kind of discourse."[27] Therefore, even without a specific political message, work created without permission serves as a general declaration of resistance, a strike against the potential barriers of communication, from marginalisation to censorship. This nature is heightened by the constant threat of eradication, and the recognition that any work that has survived longer than might be expected, has done so in the face of this threat. While the previous chapters have noted the unique state of post-quake Christchurch which has blurred the need for permission, the use of public space, even in this environment is tied to our surroundings as contestable spaces, signifying that such a shift often requires truly exceptional circumstances. Graffiti in all its forms has long utilised walls to express existence, humour, social and political discourses, and as McCormick has declared: "what is deemed profane, prurient, or otherwise unfit for polite public discourse."[28] Even within graffiti writing's fixation with names and signatures, the declaration of one's identity on someone else's property has an air of brazen impoliteness. Waclawek further notes, that by using the streets, "artists emphasize a number of obscured urban realities: that much of what may seem to be public is in fact private space, and that unauthorized public art contributes as much to the production of space and a city's visual culture as sanctioned projects."[29] The use of public space as a site of official and commercial communication has encouraged an art of resistance that has utilised these spaces as a grass roots forum for communication of varying forms. Manco has recounted that street art is both a reflection and resistance of our surrounding culture:

> "Communication" has become a modern mantra: the city streets shout with billboards, fly posters and corporate advertising, all vying for our attention. They almost invite a subversive response. As high-tech communications have increased, a low-tech reaction has been the recent explosion in street art.[30]

Guerrilla graffiti and street art are therefore alternatives acts of communication that both reacts against and mimics official forms, subverting their accepted presence through often playful

[26] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 112
[27] McCormick, "Where Angels Dare to Tread", in *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, pp. 14-16
[28] McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 19-25
[29] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, pp. 186-187
[30] Tristan Manco, *Stencil Graffiti*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002, p. 7

transformations that recognise that these objects, from walls to advertising signs, are loaded with meaning. [31]

While the compulsion to adorn and transform the post-quake surroundings, already a notable aspect of this work's earlier chapters, rendered, at least initially, unsanctioned interventions often less vilified, another important performance of such additions were the creation of public critiques and discourses that challenged authority, revealing the contestable nature of the post-disaster city.[32]

In a city damaged and deconstructed by nature and then political forces, where many of the normalised structures and performances expected in urban, and suburban landscapes have been altered, uninvited visual additions have engaged with Christchurch's politicised atmosphere, both through explicit themes, and by exemplifying the manner in which unsanctioned works reflect a public discourse as acts of resistance. From the moment the city was shaken awake on the morning of September 4th 2010, the sense of control over the physical environment eroded. The feeling of being at the mercy of nature was only one aspect of the loss of control felt by the people of Christchurch. In some areas, people were forced from their homes and businesses, only some managing to hold out as their neighbourhoods emptied (some remaining even as utilities were turned off). In addition to this intrusion, daily routines were broken, from the loss of regular businesses, to circuitous and disrupted traffic flow.[33] This sense of frustration has spurred the use of public space in a variety of ways, including the venting of political and social issues in community meetings, rallies, demonstrations and protests. Lara Strongman, in an essay for SCAPE 7, noted how the range of post-disaster art in its myriad forms included an increase in public critique as a "…marked feature of civic life during this transitional period."[34] From homeowners plastering their fences to vent frustration at their personal experience, or comment on the political environment of the city, to business owners declaring anger at their predicament on the exterior surfaces of inaccessible buildings, sentiments of

[31] This intent can be extended to other urban activities, such as skateboarding and parkour. McCormick has reasoned that: "…Graffiti, skate, and street art all operate in the interstitial spaces of the urban landscape. Just as graffiti found its voice most clearly in neglected areas of the city, urban skating located its most anarchic zones in those corporate netherworlds of urban planning that neither appeal to nor function for the publics for whom they were created." (McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, p. 23) Although it is interesting to note that graffiti and street art, with a less present body of the author in the audience's experience, leave a more visible physical alteration that survives longer than the actual creation of the disruption.

[32] The range of approaches to producing unsanctioned work has varied from those only using spaces that will not cause anger or lasting damage, to intentional and in-your-face vandalism, with little concern given to the impact.

[33] Indeed, at the time of writing, detours were still common around the eastern side of the city, as earthquake damaged roads continued to be fixed.

[34] Lara Strongman, "Art After a Disaster: The Public Unspectacular", in *SCAPE 7 Volume One: Guide & Reader*, pp. 26-36

unrest have been widespread **(Figs. 6.5, 6.6)**.[35] While these expressions on private spaces are not technically unsanctioned, their public nature positions them as an act of communciation that breaks with the expectations of such settings, and as such imbued with a sense of critique shared with the numerous guerrilla street art interventions that have engaged in such discourses.

Post-earthquake Christchurch may present a different political and social environment to Paris in 1968, where student revolutionaries plastered the walls with fly-posters, or 1970s New York which spawned graffiti writing as we know it today, but the upheaval created by the earthquakes and the social and political unrest must also be seen to have stimulated debates and interventions using public space. Often a post-disaster environment will unearth the power relations at play in a city, leaving people to question and challenge the perceptions of inequality and the way a city will recover. Solnit has argued that authority will often fear the potential of disasters to undermine their control:

> [A] power struggle often takes place in disaster- and real political and social change can result, from that struggle or from the new sense of self and society that emerges. Too, the elite often believe that if they themselves are not in control, the situation is out of control, and in their fear take repressive measures that become secondary disasters. But many others who don't hold radical ideas, don't believe in revolution, don't consciously desire profound social change find themselves in a transformed world leading a life they could not have imagined and rejoice in it.[36]

Christchurch's post-quake experience, including the decision-making processes surrounding the rebuild, the status of heritage buildings and protracted insurance issues, has awakened in many people the desire to ensure that their voice is heard. The use of public space as a site for the dissemination of messages and images, has been a common approach, often reflecting the personal as political.

In the introduction to *Once in a Lifetime*, the editorial group note that there has been a current of both official and unofficial responses to the post-earthquake situation. The distinction of official and unofficial is persistent throughout the book's collected essays, citing the Government's "extraordinary

[35] While many sanctioned murals have focussed upon aesthetic regeneration without explicit political commentary, there have been permissioned works that have engaged in explicitly political discourses. In New Brighton, depictions of Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee in the guise of American artist Shepard Fairey's iconic depiction of Barrack Obama, "Hope" replaced with the words "Democracy Nope", and Education Minister Hekia Parata reimagined as Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar* (or *Cater-Parata* as the image is entitled) **(Appendix 1: Figs. A16, A17)**, represented sanctioned images that playfully criticised and mocked political figures and issues. The Brownlee and Parata paintings were produced by Bex Gibbs, a member of pro-democracy group The Suffrajests, and Richard "Popx" Baker. (Cullen Smith, "Brownlee butt of protest", *The Star*, Wednesday, May 8, 2013, p. 1) Their placement in a community space rather than a commercial or institutional location, enabled the satirical content often avoided in sanctioned work. While these examples played out within a political discourse, they were created with permission or on private property, illustrating the power of public discourses rather than the subversion of official spaces and signs.

[36] Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell*, p. 21

powers and the legislation that granted them…" as well as the "…ways certain developers, community groups and concerned citizens have been subverting conventions to reshape some of the unwritten rules and habits of our city."[37] Furthermore, the deconstructed city, both physically and ideologically, has allowed the revelation of the underlying social structures and processes evident but often hidden within a city's existence. George Parker and Barnaby Bennett have noted how the pervasive damage of the post-quake environment has revealed both physical and social aspects: "You see things that were once hidden: empty sites and broken foundations, flows of material, networks of support, threads of power."[38] The damaged buildings perhaps indexical of the social and political forces at work in the recovery process. A piece of graffiti scrawled along the top of a Colombo Street building perhaps provided an apt instruction: "Question Everything".

Graffiti and street art's willingness to question the official imagery and infrastructure of a city affords the consideration of apparently functional objects and their underlying symbolic meaning. In the context of post-quake Christchurch's abundance of signs and barriers, Lewisohn's suggestion that graffiti may actually infer not a lack of control, but perhaps an attempt at too much control, seems apt:

> If graffiti seems barbaric, then it is a reflection of the world in which it exists. Graffiti writers are at war with the urban developers, the architects, and all the other faceless decision makers. The city walls stand for ownership and authority, and graffiti is the voice of the unelected, fighting back against systems that are imposed on them.[39]

But if this is an intrinsic quality of graffiti, one ingrained in its creation rather than necessarily in its formal or thematic vocabulary, there are also numerous approaches that attempt to contest an environment of control by engaging with the most direct symbols of that sense of authority.

The post-quake city has been heavily populated with the presence of signs of authority and instruction across the city, perhaps most notably in the erection of the central city cordon, which was patrolled by the largest internal military deployment in New Zealand's history.[40] While the military presence was reassuring for many, it inevitably also added a sense that there was a lack of free movement around the city. Even as the military presence and the cordon diminished, a feeling of the heavy control evident in the city was unavoidable. As time passed, the language of control remained physically prominent, evident in the lane and traffic management and ordinance signs, declarations of

[37] Bennett, Dann, Johnson and Reynolds, eds., *Once in a Lifetime*, p. 24
[38] Parker and Bennett, "Introduction", in *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 4
[39] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 87
[40] Georgina Stylianou, "Cordons are gone and the guard marches out", *The Press*, Monday, July 1, 2013, p. A1

"No Access" **(Fig. 6.7)**, and the hurricane fencing still framing the continued presence of vacant spaces and damaged buildings, now juxtaposed with sites (and sights) of renewal.

The post-quake city's "discourse of authority" has been illuminated, disrupted and challenged by the unsanctioned art that has provided alternatives to, imitations and alterations of street signage. In many cases, these interventions have simply utilised road signs as surfaces for stickers, posters and graffiti **(Fig. 6.8)**, instantly providing an alternative voice to the instruction imparted and as such confusing and subverting their functionality through an evident act of disobedience, even without directly referencing the content of the infrastructural support. In other examples, these forms of official communication have been mimicked. On Gloucester Street in mid-2014, a yield sign, by an unknown artist, adhered to a vacant wall, implored the viewer to "Wake Up" and take notice of the surrounding environment **(Fig. 6.9)**. On Durham Street South, an anonymous stencil, discovered in 2013, on the door of a damaged building read: "UNAUTHORISED PERSONNEL ONLY" **(Fig. 6.10)**. Surrounded by graffiti writing and a fluorescent USAR marking, the stencil was easily mistaken for another declaration of inaccessibility, yet upon closer inspection, its invitation was apparent. On the fringe of the central city, a pair of hand-painted signs, again by unknown artists, mimicked the language of official equivalents. The signs warned residents from the east to be cautious entering the central city, where road surfaces were even, unlike the buckled streets to which they had become accustomed.[41] On Manchester Street, the artist Seek produced a sculptural installation which attempted to highlight the abundance of car parks around the city. *Cardensity* **(Fig. 6.11)**, a play on the city's "Garden City" moniker, mocked City Council street signs, with an array of arrows pointing in congested directions all signalling the presence of car parks at the expense of other projects that might have made use of the vacant spaces. The object was even stencilled with a redesigned City Council logo, replete with a shattered Cathedral and the flowing Avon River replaced with a winding road. The work, erected in May 2012, remained in place for many months, perhaps a reflection of its official appearance. However there was seemingly little impact on the presence of car parks, by July 2013, over a year after the faux sign was erected car parks had increased from 33 sites in February 2012 to 43.[42] These often witty commentaries have subverted the official language of the city, and specifically the expected and pervasive elements of post-quake Christchurch, to add moments of surprise to the experience of this setting, reminders of the ability to question the daily bombardment of one-way information. Examples of the ability to surprise and subvert our expectation of signs and instructions,

[41] Uncredited, "Beware: easy driving ahead", *The Press*, Monday, December 24, 2012, p. A7
[42] Charlie Gates, "Car parks taking over the city centre", *The Press*, Saturday, July 20, 2013, p. A6

to open up new possibilities, these interventions alter the official discourse of the city by turning the power of signs back on themselves and suggesting the ability to question our acceptance of authority.

While these adaptations of official communication were often surprising and unexpected, other interventions were more explicit in their message. Due to the difficult task of rebuilding a city so significantly damaged, it was unsurprising that political bodies and politicians would be publically critiqued, both in media discourses and various other forums, but also by visual artists, many of who took to the streets. In Cathedral Square in 2013, a white sheet painted in red sign writing was attached to a remaining panel of hurricane fencing. The banner seemingly represented a widely held sentiment: 'Earthquakes stopped us, but inept procedures are killing us' **(Fig. 6.12)**, a declaration of the ongoing frustrations felt around the city. During the "100 Day Blueprint" period in July 2012, spread throughout the city, street artist Cubey pasted and stuck drawings of Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) head Roger Sutton, Central City Development Unit (CCDU) director Warwick Isaacs and Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee, three of the most influential men in post-quake Christchurch **(Fig. 6.13)**. The images identified the men as "Roga, Waza and Geza", with Sutton's mouth covered by a sticking plaster, Isaac's hearing blocked by construction-site ear muffs, and Brownlee's vision obscured by a blindfold, rendering the "Three Wise Men" as seeing, hearing, and speaking no truth.[43] In 2013, Cubey was also responsible for stencilled placards erected on Colombo Street that appeared to advocate against genetic engineering, but in reality had a different target altogether. Intentionally designed to be read as "KEEP CHCH G.E. FREE", itself a popular topic of protest, the artist added three red letters, giving the appearance of an uninvited addition. The signs, made of korflute plastic, now reading "KEEP CHCH GE-rry FREE" **(Fig. 6.14)**, again in reference to Brownlee.

Brownlee was also the subject of another somewhat controversial work by anonymous an interventionist. In late 2013, Small metal plaques were attached to public seating outside of a High Street café, dedicating the wooden benches to Brownlee and embattled Christchurch City Council CEO Tony Marryatt, each of who, the plaques declared, "hates Christchurch and every one in it."[44] Plaques, as signals of official civic recognition, provide a fitting form for street artists to subvert expectations. The plaques were quickly removed, but not before causing a stir on social media, public comments varied from those who found them humorous to those who believed them mean-spirited.[45] After their quick removal, new plaques, this time without the specific mention of Brownlee and Marryatt were

[43] Bennett, Boidi and Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City*, p. 254
[44] Georgina Stylianou, "Park bench dedication to Gerry Brownlee", November 21, 2013, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/city-centre/9425736/Park-bench-dedication-to-Gerry-Brownlee, accessed November 22, 2013
[45] Ibid.

re-installed, remaining in place as of 2016 **(Fig. 6.15)**. Due to his visibility Brownlee was a popular target, but references to New Zealand Prime Minister John Key have also been prominent; from various scrawled messages expressing a dislike, to a repeated stencilled image of the Prime Minister's head with his name altered to "DON KEY" in disparate sites across the city, from Cathedral Square to Lyttelton. Indeed, an example of the DON KEY stencil in Lyttelton also highlighted the susceptibility of street art to be altered and the original statement hi-jacked. The Star of David was scrawled on the forehead of the stencil of Key, adding an anti-Semitic element that was not part of the original image **(Fig. 6.16)**. The unpleasant nature of this addition highlights that while graffiti and street art can subvert and contest official components of cityscapes, they are also open to alteration themselves. An early appearance of Key's image was found along the traditional home of graffiti writing in Christchurch, the central city train tracks on Moorhouse Avenue. Surrounded by graffiti writing, a black and white stencilled image of the suit-clad Key holding a paint roller, suggested his authorship of the accompanying message: "Stay Strong ChCh" **(Fig. 6.17)**. The image did not necessarily or explicitly appear as a critique of Key's leadership, but in his smiling appearance and the relative futility of his message, it could be read as a sentiment of inefficiency and distance of leadership.

Matt Mason, author of *The Pirate's Dilemma*, a book about how rebellious youth cultures have significantly influenced contemporary society, utilises the metaphor of military "blowback" to describe the presence of graffiti as "…the hallmark of a turf war that has raged for centuries between the establishment and a secretive, loose-knit network that doesn't like the top-down, one-way flow of information in public places."[46] On High Street in 2013, an uninvited addition to the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's large reproduction of Tony Fomison's *No!* (1969-71) on the side of a building further highlighted this sense of "blowback", and highlighted that graffiti and street art can challenge not only civic authority, but also the cultural authority represented by certain types of public art. Fomison's dark image of a figure shoving a hand out to obstruct prying eyes, although not instantly recognisable as such, was part of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's *Populate* project.[47] When the image's installation was noted on the Art Gallery website's blog, a photograph depicted the work being placed over a pre-existing graffiti throw-up.[48] The installed image was soon adorned with a replacement throw-up on the bottom corner of the completely installed image, but this time with a message for the Gallery **(Fig. 6.18)**. "Keep your shit 4 the Gallerys!" [sic] declared

[46] Matt Mason, *The Pirate's Dilemma: How hackers, punk capitalists and graffiti millionaires are remixing our culture and changing the world*, London, Allen Lane, 2008, p. 103

[47] Indeed, social media posts depicting the work claimed it as a piece of street art, highlighting both the lack of recognition, as well as the difficult definition of the term itself.

[48] David Simpson, "Talk to the hand", October 22, 2013, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2013/10/22/talk-to-the-hand/, accessed September 15, 2014

Slepa, the responding graffiti writer. The outstretched hand of Fomison's character added to a sense of tension between the sanctioned image and the castigating response. In the competitive and egotistical world of graffiti, "going over" another writer's work is generally only acceptable with a bigger and more stylistically impressive replacement by a respected artist, or is performed as a direct insult to another writer.[49] Slepa's response to the Gallery covering his work can thus be seen as a value judgement and a challenge to the gallery's reach. The graffiti writer in effect declared the image undeserving of respect, belonging in a private setting rather than the open spaces of the city. While the reproduction of Fomison's image was installed as part of a wider initiative on the part of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu to reactivate the city's post-earthquake setting, the graffiti response reflected the open nature of public spaces and the ability of unsanctioned interventionists to resist the sanctioned aspects of the environment. As such Slepa's retort can be viewed as a strike against the authorised cultural forces reconstructing Christchurch and in doing so reinforcing specific expectations. But if Slepa's engagement with the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu highlighted the ability of guerrilla interventions to challenge cultural authority, the popularity of graffiti and street art in sanctioned forms has also been a notable aspect of the post-quake landscape. This emerging presence has perhaps been most notable in a significant event that both transformed parts of the city's broken surroundings and drew crowds to a celebration of these art forms within an unlikely setting.

A lick of paint: Public art and the rise of street art and graffiti in post-earthquake Christchurch

As would be expected, much of Christchurch's most notable post-quake public art has been commissioned or produced with permission. Established arts organisations have expectedly played a visible role in the city's sanctioned public art presence. The Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, and SCAPE Public Art have been responsible for a range of high-profile public art in the city, presenting a wide scope of work by established artists. But while SCAPE has always dealt with public space, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu has had to engage with the city's streets not only as a way of contributing to Christchurch's recovery, but also to maintain an active presence in the city whilst their physical home remained closed. Despite the lengthy closure of the gallery building, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's public role has been evident

[49] The act of going over another artist's name has a long history in graffiti culture, and even in this local example, Slepa's presence on the Fomison image was eventually painted over other graffiti writers **(Appendix 1: Fig. A18)**.

throughout the central city in various projects across the post-quake landscape. The Gallery utilised various sites to maintain an exhibition schedule within temporary spaces, but a visible public space presence, in the form of the *Outer Spaces* and *Populate* programmes, was also a vital part of the institution's post-quake identity, with works such as Michael Parekowhai's *On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer* (2011) serving as poignant and popular additions to the barren Madras Street setting where they were temporarily displayed.[50]

If the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu needed to extend its public presence as a result of the enforced closure of its physical home, SCAPE's role as a public art event meant it was bound to engage with the impacted terrain. The SCAPE 7 Public Art Biennial, staged between late September and early November 2013, brought a range of projects to life around the central city that utilised the post-quake setting as a fragile, potent, and ever-changing setting for consideration and engagement. SCAPE 7 drew on three concepts: mobility, embracing or anticipating the unexpected and possibility, concepts that curator Blair French suggested encompassed "ways of thinking across the recent past, the present and the future of life in Christchurch".[51] SCAPE 7 added two permanent "legacy" projects to the city's public art collection. Mischa Kuball's *Solidarity Grid* (2013-2015), street lamps gifted to Christchurch by various cities, stretched along Rolleston Avenue, gestures of infrastructural recovery as well as the symbolic giving of light. Julia Morison's *Tree Houses for Swamp Dwellers* (2013) **(Fig. 6.19)** presented ten transportable architectural pods that provide potential utility and mobility, reflecting the city's swampy past as well as the future through an embrace of change. Jessica Halliday noted that as both art and architecture, *Tree Houses for Swamp Dwellers* "integrates the purposes and concerns (social, material, aesthetic, spatial, personal, physical and symbolic) of both creative fields into one work."[52] Temporary projects from the Biennial's six week span invited audiences to reconsider the surrounding setting, from Zina Swanson's *Can Anybody Hear Me?* (2013), a hypnotic attempt to communicate with the plant life across the city using various botanical experts as conduits, to David Cross' *Powerslide/Level Playing Field* (2013), a giant inflatable structure that activated a barren corner lot with a competitive game that played on and played out *on* the city's earthquake afflicted terrain.[53] Both the works of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and SCAPE Public Art have been positioned as "official" parts of the city's creative, physical and social recovery, and while unsanctioned graffiti and street art have not been afforded the same status, the sanctioned presence of these forms have become increasingly celebrated as symbols of Christchurch's renewal.

[50] By 2015 Parekowhai's sculpture had been relocated to New Regent Street.
[51] French, "Treading Lightly", in *SCAPE 7 Volume One: Guide & Reader*, pp. 12-17
[52] Jessica Halliday, "The Tradition of Both-And", in *SCAPE 7 Volume Two: Artist Projects*, 2014, p. 120
[53] SCAPE 8 was staged in late 2015.

However, while these expected participants illustrated the diversity of contemporary public art practices, as suggested in previous chapters, the influence and presence of graffiti and street art has also been notable, but often in unexpected and complicated ways. While challenging accepted and expected notions of public art and those responsible for its construction by positioning a new breed of artists with unique artistic backgrounds as prominent permissioned contributors to city walls, graffiti and street art's increasingly sanctioned presence must also be understood as now being part of this ideological construction of urban landscapes. In the central city, a large work by Melbourne artist Ash Keating illustrated this relationship, exhibiting both an authorisation by a significant cultural institution and a technique popular amongst guerrilla street artists. After his 2010 SCAPE 6 project *Gardensity* (perhaps an influence on the title of guerrilla artist Seek's *Cardensity* produced in 2012) was disrupted, Keating revisited the city in 2012 to produce a large wall painting for the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Gap Filler. *Concrete Propositions* (2012), was a massive explosion of flaming colour dispelled from fire extinguishers on Manchester Street. The exposed wall was sprayed with bursts of red, orange, and blue paint, creating a hazy, shimmering cacophony of eye-catching colour that brought the wall to life despite an undefined form. Jenny Harper expressed the hope that "…this work will provide a welcome injection of energy and colour into the streetscape", a common refrain for the art produced around the post-quake city.[54] Although the work's connection to urban art was never made clear in the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's presentation of *Concrete Propositions* **(Fig. 6.20)**, the artist's background reveals the influence of post-graffiti practices in the realm of public art.[55] *Concrete Propositions* suggested a disruptive intervention through a technique popular amongst graffiti and street artists. Keating's dispersion of paint from fire extinguishers in *Concrete Propositions* had been a feature of his street art past under the pseudonym Dest. The technique's haphazard and explosive nature upsets clean urban surfaces, a contrast to the expected order and tidiness of much public art and corporate branding and advertising. Jacklyn Babington has noted Keating's transition: "The artist Ash Keating (who has previously worked as the street artist Dest) is one of the scenes leading street intervention artists. Keating's practice has dramatically evolved from simple street art forms based on the recycling and the re-contextualising of street refuse into complex, large-scale and site-specific street performances."[56] While Keating has largely discarded his Dest identity and expanded his practice to more conceptual and participatory

[54] Uncredited, "Splash of colour for central city", *The Press*, Monday, November 12, 2012, p. A5

[55] When *Concrete Propositions* deteriorated over time, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu essentially disowned the project. In late 2015, the work was tagged by local graffiti writers, who employed a similar technique to produce their tags on a massive scale. The work was eventually re-painted by Keating, who returned to the city in early 2016 **(Appendix 1: Fig. A19)**. The saga raised a number of issues, most notably the demarcation of graffiti and street art as an influence on public art practices.

[56] Babington, *Space Invaders*, p. 30

projects, the echo of his street art past in *Concrete Propositions* provided a reminder of the encroachment of urban art and artists into the wider art world.[57]

As a large scale wall painting, *Concrete Propositions* was symbolic of the most common form of sanctioned graffiti and street art. Murals have had an early and consistent presence in post-quake Christchurch, reflecting their emergence globally as a form of visually striking public art embraced by many cities (even those who continue to eradicate and criminalise unsanctioned graffiti and street art).[58] As a form of public art that is relatively inexpensive, does not require significant logistical organisation (such as the need for engineers and construction crews as in large scale sculptural installations), and can essentially exist anywhere a wall is found, the attraction of this movement is understandable. Murals have traditionally been viewed as a way to divert graffiti writers towards more socially acceptable contributions, and as such in opposition to unsanctioned interventions and graffiti vandalism. As 2012 drew to a close and 2013 dawned, Wongi "Freak" Wilson and Ikarus produced perhaps the most visibly prominent exposure of sanctioned graffiti art in the city at that time. As part of the multi-disciplinary Art Beat event, produced by arts advocacy group Arts Voice with the support of Re:START Mall, the two artists painted and displayed two billboards in the popular container mall **(Fig. 6.21)**. This prominent public presence within a significant location afforded a previously unfamiliar level of exposure. Although an independent part of the programme, which featured music, photography, performance and various visual arts, the inclusion of the billboard project illustrated the recognition of the potential of graffiti art to invigorate public spaces, and afforded the opportunity to expose the art and artists to a wider public audience outside of often negative media coverage regarding graffiti vandalism. After painting the twelve by three metre production in front of passing crowds over the span of a week (including a much publicised Royal visit), the boards were eventually split in two and affixed to metal billboard frames on the concrete exterior of an empty carpark building overlooking the outdoor mall.[59] The image was based upon the fairy tale *Pinocchio* (drawing its visual inspiration from the iconic Walt Disney version).[60] Set in Geppetto's workshop, the work featured the artist's graffiti pieces surrounded by lifeless dolls manoeuvred by large white cartoon gloves from the top of the image. The graffiti pieces appeared as unfinished wooden constructions, with protruding nails and unpainted sections revealing the wood grain, works in progress within the candle-lit

[57] Although masked and maintaining his pseudonymous presence, Dest utilizes this technique in an underpass in Australian street art documentary *Rash*. (dir. Nicholas Hansen, Mutiny Media, 2005).
[58] Young, "Legal/Illegal: Street Art in Australia", in *Space Invaders*, p. 67
[59] The production and installation of the billboards proved challenging and highlighted the obstacles evident in working with permission rather than bypassing consent. The adaptability of the artists proved a beneficial quality as rules and regulations continually raised stumbling blocks to the project's completion.
[60] The Disney influence once again raises the "open source" approach of graffiti and street artists. Once finished and installed, I was asked by an acquaintance who worked for SCAPE Public Art Biennial, if the artists were concerned about copyright infringement.

workshop. The narrative suggested the struggle faced by graffiti artists to be accepted as "artists" while having to make concessions around projects to ensure commercial opportunities. The interaction of the artists with passers-by while painting the billboards resulted in positive responses and interactions. The billboards remained a point of attraction in the mall for several months until September 2013, their reception a stark contrast to the perceived nuisance of the unsanctioned graffiti writing around the city.[61] The juxtaposition of the billboards with the nearby graffiti writing on the building provided an interesting realisation of the potential of graffiti to be both a resistant voice amongst an urban environment and when more elaborate, a tool that can give life and make an area a more vibrant place to inhabit.

While the *Pinocchio* billboards were a highly visible example due to their location, other wall paintings around the city have illustrated the ability to complicate the readings of sanctioned work and unsanctioned interventions. Tess Sheerin's variously sized murals that have appeared and disappeared around the city have illustrated the varied appearances of sanctioned street art. While the relatively small *R U a Baboon?* (2012), tucked into a corner of an empty lot on Manchester Street, gave the appearance of an unsanctioned intervention, with a technique the artist describes as gesso-release, a baboon surrounded by splattered paint and stencils, the larger *The Hope Bear* (2013) on Riccarton Road, and *Giraffing Around* (2013) were increasingly larger and unmistakeably sanctioned murals **(Figs. 6.22-6.24)**. In each example Sheerin employed similar techniques, often with a level of chaotic movement, hurling paint-filled water balloons at the wall to create a surface texture in *The Hope Bear*, while in *Giraffing Around,* the massive vertical bands of colour that covered the side of a soon-to-be-demolished Liverpool Street building were created by dispelling paint from fire extinguishers in the same technique employed by Keating in *Concrete Propositions*.

On Manchester Street a collaborative transformation of a damaged building was, rather than a singular mural work, a permissioned take-over of a physical space filled with disparate and changing elements by a number of artists, again complicating the identification of sanctioned graffiti and street art. In its varied and changing appearance, the building "take over" was easily mistaken for unsanctioned graffiti and street art, but as a permissioned project, it illustrated the ability of graffiti artists to transform a derelict and crumbling building in a bright, vibrant point of interest. Beginning in mid-2013, an unused building on the corner of Manchester Street and Welles Street (already a

[61] The Pinocchio billboards were eventually replaced by work by Malaysian artist Roslisham Ismail (aka Ise) for SCAPE 7, who incidentally had included graffiti art as part of his project *t-OWN Planning* (2013), which invited participants to consider the potential features of the city as it recovered.

popular site for guerrilla artists[62]) was turned over with permission to a group of artists. Over an ongoing period, Smeagol, Ekos, Devos One, Drows, Freak, Yikes and Kieos, amongst other contributors adorned the broken buildings with names and characters. The exposed sides of the building were covered with graffiti art, names and characters. Exposed fixtures and aspects of the building altered by the partial demolition and earthquake damage were adorned in playful ways, a giant monster, painted by Smeagol, occupied an exposed upstairs room, while Yikes transformed windows into framed faces, turning the building into an outdoor gallery. A door way became the tardis of *Dr Who,* while a small placard declared "YIKES 4 MAYOR" in a comment on the ubiquitous election campaign signs then dotting the city **(Figs. 6.25, 6.26)**. The building's physical form continued to change over the following months, with new additions making the site an evolving point of interest that reflected the approach of unsanctioned artists when the risk of working without permission had been removed. Perhaps the most notable addition was a massive caricature of graffiti artist Ikarus by his DTR crew-mate Freak in 2014 **(Fig. 6.27)**. The larger-than-life figure, with an exaggerated top heavy appearance and marked by his signature fuzzy leopard hat, was both humorous and vibrant, but also echoed a civic statue, standing upright but intentionally lacking the gravitas of these traditional markers. Notably, this building takeover suggested the way graffiti and street art can provide interesting, vibrant additions to cityscapes, with permission, in alternative approaches from the more singular form often exhibited in murals. While these examples illustrate the enduring presence of graffiti and street art in the form of sanctioned murals and wall paintings, at the end of 2013, two events would provide more explicit examples of the global popularity and recognition of these art movements, and specifically of the growing contemporary muralist movement as permissioned contributors, while also suggesting the rebellious foundations of these cultures as an enduring aspect of their consideration and, indeed, popularity.

"Best Museum Exhibit": The *Rise* exhibition, an alleyway and the expansion of graffiti and street art

The neo-gothic architecture of the Canterbury Museum, at the entrance to the city's picturesque Botanic Gardens, forms part of the city's traditional colonial identity and history. But in December 2013 the museum's grey stone exterior was adorned with a large banner depicting an often vilified symbol of unruly urban youth: a can of spray paint discharging a mist of blue paint, treading a fine line

[62] The same site had been host to a sticking plaster by the Band Aid Bandits, Seek's *Cardensity*, Jeremy Sauzier's *HOME* painting (which was covered by a painting of a statue), and even the word "Veganism" written in large text across one wall, as well as numerous smaller additions.

between the suggestion of creativity and rebellion. This strange juxtaposition was not vandalism or a bold prank; it was an advertisement for a summer exhibition very different from the dioramas purporting to show pre-colonial and Victorian life customarily encountered inside. Indeed, this unlikely setting would play host to thousands of visitors drawn to see the Museum's walls covered in graffiti and street art. *Rise* was presented by Oi YOU!, a street art event organisation founded by Nelson-based British expatriate couple George Shaw and Shannon Webster, and the Canterbury Museum as a celebration of graffiti and street art's emergence as a popular 'global phenomenon', and included, in addition to the significant museum exhibition, a range of exterior murals across a selection of the city's many exposed walls.[63] The opening night of the exhibition, with the museum's galleries filled with city officials, business people and cultural commentators mixing with back-pack wearing graffiti writers and street artists, provided a juxtaposition representative of the changing and often unfamiliar terrain the urban art movement now navigates.[64] From the Oi YOU! collection of prints, paintings, drawings and sculptural objects, to the in-situ wall paintings, *Rise* illustrated the expanding spectrum of contemporary graffiti and street art and their reception within wider popular imagination, while also acknowledging their unique histories and traditions, all within the context of an organised and supported show inside a respected cultural institution, a representation of the diversities, contradictions and complexities of contemporary graffiti and street art.

The admittance of graffiti and street art into the museum was signalled by a range of wall paintings and interventions throughout the building, including a work by graffiti artist Sofles that greeted visitors in the foyer and nearby gift shop **(Fig. 6.28)**. While the Australian artist's depiction of faces, limbs, flowers, and other objects and elements evoked museum display culture, the bright, buttery yellow and brown colours, crisp, graphic style and frenetic composition, even in two-dimensional form, provided a stark contrast to the posed stillness and controlled lighting of the nearby dioramas.[65] If Sofles' work provided an isolated signpost of graffiti and street art's presence, then the main exhibition space presented an immersive, playful and condensed view of an urban environment inside an institution typically charged with preserving objects. The museum presented a nuanced space for the presentation of the traditionally anti-institutional forms of graffiti and street art. Furthermore, the museum's broader interest in historical preservation was a notable contextual element of *Rise,* ensuring the social reading of graffiti and street art was inevitably as prominent as aesthetic and

[63] Oi YOU! *Rise Street Art* flier, uncredited, undated, unpaginated

[64] The exposure of the event was illustrated by Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel opening the exhibition, and organiser George Shaw interviewed live on national television.

[65] Other spaces inside the Museum were also painted by *Rise* artists. A geometric abstraction by Australian artist Beastman embellished the café, while a giant penguin with an exposed respiratory system in a diagrammatic depiction, by Belgian artist ROA **(Appendix 1: Fig. A20)**, filled the curved ceiling of the bird aviary.

formal concerns.[66] Unsanctioned graffiti and street art have never been particularly concerned with preservation, their existence long entwined with ephemerality, threatened by the many external forces within the urban landscape, including the cannibalistic and competitive nature of other artists. But it was not only the museum context that suggested the issue of preservation, the presentation of a selection of Shaw and Webster's private Oi YOU! collection (the largest collection of art by street artists in the Southern Hemisphere) also highlighted the production of work intended for greater longevity than that in the streets.

The Oi YOU! Collection was spread throughout several spaces and displayed a range of studio work by leading figures from the contemporary graffiti and street art worlds, showcasing the various styles, themes, media and materials of artists such as Os Gemeos, Faile and Swoon.[67] In the new Millennium, the movement between streets, studios and galleries has become more fluid, highlighting the transition from anonymous social interventionists into recognisable art world figures. Work is sold and exhibited in a range of forms and forums, often illustrating a greater overlap with contemporary art world practices and markets.[68] The shift from street to gallery raises a number of issues, including that of critical judgment within an expanded sphere of reference, the necessary process of mediation, exposed authorship and permanence against ephemerality. The private status of the collection ensured the work was a disparate array of autonomous objects in no evident shared context other than as "artwork made by street artists for sale."[69] The Oi YOU! collection represented work designed for consumption and acquisition, and as a result less entangled with a specific experience of place. A longstanding problem in the transition from street to gallery, such criticism arose as New York's subway graffiti writers began exhibiting in Manhattan galleries in the late seventies and early eighties.[70] Robert S. Drew has noted how commentators bemoaned the loss of vitality in the transition from train to gallery, rather than on aesthetic grounds, often using loaded language in comparing

[66] Although the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu building was closed and as such was unable to host *Rise*, it has been suggested that the Gallery director declined involvement in the show, potentially illustrating a lingering bias of the local institutional art world towards graffiti and street art.
[67] Many artists who work in the streets without permission and exhibit in galleries will maintain a level of secrecy, using their street pseudonyms or exhibiting under a different guise. Some will even avoid exposing themselves in photographs or even attending shows in person.
[68] Carlo McCormick has reflected on the treatment of graffiti and graffiti artists by the "downtown" New York art scene: "When it comes to the trivializing and (often racially) condescending way that graffiti was dealt with at the time, as well as the reprehensible manner in which a complex movement was treated like a passing fad, rapidly consumed and spat out, the art world has a lot to answer for." (McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 19-25) For some artists, working on the street is a reaction against the art world experienced through an education, while for others the route is opposite, with street practice leading to an education as a pathway to make a living from their work.
[69] *Rise* exhibition notes, unpublished
[70] http://www.deitch.com/projects/project_images.php?slideShowId=150&projId=128, accessed September 14, 2014, http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/swoon/, accessed September 14, 2014

graffiti writers to caged animals who were rendered de-fanged once their work was re-contextualised.[71] But today, many graffiti and street artists are aware of the difficulties in this cross-over and take greater agency of the transition, developing both practices and strategies that assist in the movement between both spaces. However, the works in the Oi YOU! collection exhibited as part of *Rise* were not made specifically for the show, nor were they explorations of a physical exhibition setting, as found in the increasing interest of many street artists in installation practices that create enveloping environments, as evident in Ian Strange's *Final Act*, which was staged in a separate gallery.

The exhibition's main setting was a fabricated three-dimensional street scene, evoking an updated version of the museum's long-standing Victorian street display, populated with graffiti and street art rather than blacksmiths and Penny Farthing cycles. Upon entering the main exhibition space, visitors found themselves in the middle of the street; a centre line at their feet driving off into the distance of a receding *trompe l'oeil* urban scene painted on the rear wall by Australian artist Thom Buchanan **(Fig. 6.29)**. Rather than a historic reference, Buchanan's scene was a composite of pre-earthquake Christchurch and more generic urban archetypes. The scene contrasted with the broken city outside the museum, with dense architecture and cars lining the roadside signifying a human presence. Flanking the street and extending from Buchanan's scene were three-dimensional architectural spaces, allowing the audience to explore the constructed landscape and segmented displays as if wandering a compacted city. On the right, an industrial warehouse displayed an array of work by British artist Banksy from the Oi YOU! collection, with prints, paintings, posters and various art objects by the world's most ubiquitous street art figure.[72] Banksy provided a recognisable presence symbolic of street art's mainstream emergence. When *Rise* was announced to the public in *The Press* in September 2013, the headline declared: "Banksy street art features in festival", the popular recognition and appeal of the Bristol artist's humorous social commentary and accessible aesthetic offered as the key selling point.[73] The varied works illustrated the subversive and anti-authoritarian sentiments of Banksy's work, from the counterfeit British Pound notes printed with the image of Princess Diana, to references to Queen Victoria, military forces and surveillance tactics. However these works, perhaps now reflections of Banksy's high profile, were divorced from their original social context by distance and time, re-contextualised within a post-disaster city facing questions around public space, political processes and the task of rebuilding a city.

[71] Drew, "Graffiti as Public and Private Art", in *On the Margins of the Art World*, pp. 231-248
[72] The setting referred to the artist's staging of exhibitions Turf War (2003) and Barely Legal (2006) inside warehouses rather than galleries.
[73] Charlie Gates, "Banksy street art features in festival", *The Press*, p. A3

Nearly all available walls of the main exhibition hall were adorned with paintings by artists from New Zealand and Australia. Although produced specifically for *Rise*, and as such potentially understood as responses to the artists' experience of the city, the images were not curated under a specific theme, and many echoed the murals by the same artists outside the museum. Displaying the established styles, themes, characters, and technical flourishes for which they have become known, the wall paintings served as transplanted examples of graffiti and street art's evolving public presence. In echoing many of the outdoor murals, the interior wall paintings presented an interesting relationship to the exhibition's physical environment. While the constructed street scene provided a three-dimensional setting and Buchanan's backdrop provided an urban context, the wall paintings were produced on surfaces that were not explicitly or obviously extensions of this fabricated space, occupying more self-contained areas **(Figs. 6.30, 6.31)**. By removing the wall paintings from the street setting, it ensured the works were considered autonomously, valued for their technical qualities and individual thematic concerns, rather than contextualised within an urban environment and the associations that come from such a context, despite the inherent connection as "street art".

At the Eastern end of the hall, Askew One's *Leeya* **(Fig. 6.32)** calmly stared out across the exhibition space. An intricate visage in white aerosol paint was overlaid across a bright pink background densely populated with colourful, painterly shapes and strokes. The dynamism of the colourful background both highlighted and contrasted with the flicks and sprays of detail that rendered the portrait. Closer inspection revealed both the imperfect nature of the medium and the artist's impressive technique. The portrait of Leeya Warrander, one of the organisers of the *From the Ground Up* event in which Askew One also participated, continued the artist's investigation of the people encountered on his travels and concepts of cultural identity and migration.[74] On an adjacent wall, New Plymouth artist Eno's elemental and symbolic architectural environment **(Fig. 6.33)**, evoking the work of M. C. Escher, hovered above a floating cradle of water amidst a dense black cosmic space. Eno's buildings, created through the use of paint rollers and brushes rather than spray cans, formed the shape of an infinity symbol. The image was intricately detailed but intentionally less-refined and more muted in palette than the neighbouring *Leeya*. It shared a sense of possibility and investigation through inspection, while also providing a more explicit reference to physical exploration through its architectural setting. The cryptic environment provided a touchstone with the city being re-constructed outside the museum, without any specific or recognisable reference to the city's broken landscape. At the far end of the hall, Wellington duo BMD, afforded the largest space inside the museum, playfully filled the wall with a massive crouching dog, pieced together from scores of interlocking bird characters from

[74] Askew One's outdoor works for both *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* were also continuations of the artist's *Evolving Face* series, ensuring a thematic and visual consistency to his Christchurch work.

their coda of images. The image suggested the make-up of a larger community, and as such the collective experience of both the earthquakes and the recovery process. The wall of the stair case at the western end of the hall was originally painted by Lister in a frenetic work with exploded streams of paint connecting stylised faces, indicating the artist's free-style approach to work in public space.[75] Other wall spaces were filled by artists displaying their varied interests and signature styles: Sean "Ghøstie" Duffell's intricate, insect-like character symmetrically sprawled across a wall, Jacob Yikes' detailed, interlocking design occupied another, and Australian artist Drapl's typographic work transformed a corner into an apartment building, declaring: "From the penthouse apartment to the rats in the basement is not so far", perhaps a rumination on the morality of urban gentrification, but also of the changing status of graffiti and street art and the potentially fickle nature of such mainstream popularity.

Presenting a sanctioned celebration of urban art would inevitably prove difficult and contentious, and how to represent the subversive and outsider qualities of graffiti and street art is an intrinsic challenge for such exhibitions. For many, the attraction and validity of graffiti and street art is found in their transgressive and disruptive nature, yet the transference of these qualities to an institutional setting is almost impossible. Lewisohn has argued that graffiti and street art are at their best when illegal, when they

> …have political and ethical connotations that are lost in sanctioned works. There is a tangible conceptual aura that is stronger in illegal graffiti: the sense of danger the artist felt is transferred to the viewer. A work of graffiti or street art in a gallery or museum can feel safe, or as if its wings have been clipped….[76]

This difficulty was evident in *Rise*, which as an organised event inside a cultural institution, was never able to fully embrace illegal graffiti and street art in any form. The guerrilla production of graffiti and street art has provided opposition to civic authority and evidence of the potential to create art outside the established art world, making it a difficult proposition for the Canterbury Museum to undertake.[77]As Lewisohn suggests, museums, as often government-controlled or funded institutions, should be considered "as part of the political apparatus – as tools of regeneration, educational vehicles

[75] After the completion of *Rise*, the staircase wall was eventually re-painted by Auckland's Berst at the decision of the Museum, Lister's freely chaotic work replaced by an equally busy, but more organised gridlock of detailed intricacies. The decision to replace Lister's work was likely due to the rough and haphazard appearance of the work, despite it firmly representing the Australian artist's developed style. Berst had earlier produced a huge wall painting in Sydenham as part of the *From the Ground Up* project, the impressive work leading to his recruitment to paint inside the museum despite not originally being part of *Rise*.
[76] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 127
[77] While this has long been an aspect of unsanctioned street art, the discussion of the fluidity of contemporary artists between street and gallery also shows a blurring of these distinctions. The variety of intention is equaled only by the variety of styles found across urban art.

and arbiters of taste."[78] *Rise* must be contextualised within the stance taken around unsanctioned interventions necessitated by the museum's civic position, despite the driving role played by the independent Oi YOU! organisation. Announcing *Rise* to the media, Canterbury Museum director Anthony Wright distanced the exhibition from unsanctioned expressions, declaring the event had not been designed to champion graffiti or vandalism, but instead to profile street art as a recognised art world genre, noting its inclusion at the 2013 Venice Biennale.[79] Wright's comments illustrate the persistent need to separate the sanctioned presentation of street art from illicit urban art (and specifically graffiti), but also the increased presence within the institutional art world as evidence of validation.[80] Wright later reiterated the museum's approach, insisting: "We thought very carefully about it… the highest risk was that the museum might be seen to be glorifying graffiti. We certainly aren't condoning or encouraging or glorifying graffiti…That's been part of all of our messaging, including in the show."[81] *Rise* attempted to navigate a celebration of the increasingly visible sanctioned incarnations of graffiti and street art, while through various signals, acknowledging the rebellious nature that gave rise to, and continues to underscore and influence, the urban art movement and its ability to disrupt and contest the visual control of cities.

There were numerous echoes of graffiti and street art's rebellious and outsider nature throughout the museum. These examples were not truly subversive and transgressive disruptions, but they did provide a chance to contemplate the traditions of graffiti and street art within the obvious limitations. Housed inside a cosy living room located in the street scene were the "Corrupt Kiwi Classics" of the pseudonymous artist Milton Springsteen **(Fig. 6.34)**, a series of iconic New Zealand paintings remodelled with playful references to contemporary life. Springsteen's paintings were not defacements of actual paintings, but instead recreations that provided a metaphorical vandalism of iconic images and New Zealand's cultural and artistic identity. In *Bogan Creek*, a version of Bill Sutton's *Dry September* (1949), the AA road sign reading "Bruce Creek" is crudely repainted as "Bogan Creek" by an anonymous vandal. While in *Beefed Up*, the station hut in Rita Angus' *Cass* (1936) is plastered with bright blue graffiti.[82] Instead of being presented as a street artist making studio work, as were

[78] Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, p. 127
[79] Charlie Gates, "Banksy street art features in festival", *The Press*, p. A3
[80] Wright is likely referring to the Venezuelan pavilion in the 2013 Biennale which presented urban artists. But this was not the only example, in 2004, Street Market, an installation by Todd James, Barry McGee and Stephen Powers, was selected for the Venice Biennale. While these were an official entries, in 2009, street art's presence was felt in more rebellious manner when Brooklyn artist Swoon essentially gate crashed the Biennale, sailing into the city on a flotilla made from various detritus and carrying a band of artists and friends, Swoon had made her name as a street artist but has expanded her practice into a range of performance and installation projects..
[81] Will Harvie, "Fine line between art and graffiti", *The Press*, Monday, January 13, 2014, p. A5
[82] The name Milton Springsteen is possibly a reference to a fictional town from a comedy album by British comic Alexei Sayle. (Charlie Gates, "Who is the real Milton Springsteen?", March 14, 2014,

the artists represented in the Oi YOU! collection, Springsteen instead shared in the playful spirit and disruptive nature of graffiti and street art. Springsteen's paintings were re-enactments of the subversive role of graffiti and street art in city streets, made more relevant due to the placement inside a respected cultural institution, the traditional protectors of such venerated cultural objects. As "remixes", or alterations of New Zealand artistic icons, Springsteen's paintings reflected the appropriation of popular culture by graffiti and street artists, as signs of influence. Due to their anonymity and the lack of mediation on the streets, guerrilla artists are afforded an "open source" approach, within which intellectual property can be replicated, altered and subverted, often revealing the contradictions of contemporary society.[83]

While Springsteen's paintings suggested the associated subversions of graffiti and street art, a series of small, playful interventions throughout the Museum's existing displays were posed as uninvited disruptions to surprise an un-expecting audience. These interventions, which included a wind-up key on the back of a taxidermy penguin **(Fig. 6.35)**, a melting china teapot **(Fig. 6.36)**, and a rock of kryptonite amongst a geological display, were reminiscent of the "art pranks" of Banksy. In 2005, the Bristol artist installed *Peckham Rock*, a piece of concrete with a crude drawing of a figure pushing a shopping trolley, without permission in the British Museum, accompanied by a description that claimed the work as "Wall art" from East London and the "post-catatonic era" by "Banksymus Maximus".[84] However, while Banksy's uninvited pranks questioned the privilege evident in museums and art galleries, the *Rise* interventions were a strategic part of the show and despite subversive appearances, were not truly a challenge to the power and decision making processes of the institution, but in fact an affirmation of the controlled and contrived nature of the display.

While the *Rise* street scene was not one of chaotic disruption, it was populated with small additions that suggested our everyday interactions with graffiti and street art as alternative visual interventions into our surrounding cityscapes. Throughout the scene, signs of civic order and authority were

---

http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/9826823/Who-is-the-real-Milton-Springsteen, accessed May 5, 2014)

[83] The use of popular culture imagery is evident as far back as the common appearance of underground comic illustrator Vaughan Bode's lizards on New York Subway trains, and the smoking stickman of Stay High 149 taken from the logo of the 1960s television programme *The Saint*, to more recent subversions and appropriations by post-graffiti artists, the anonymous and non-commercial use of such images has always been outside of legalities – whether simply "borrowed" or altered. Indeed, the open-source nature of the work of graffiti and street artists was raised in a high profile example more recently. Shepard Fairey's iconic *Obama Hope* (2008) poster which resulted in legal action against the artist over the un-permissioned use of an American Associated Press image highlighted the difference in use between the commercial and street art worlds.

[84] Dickens, "Placing post-graffiti…", *Cultural Geographies*, accessed October 12, 2013. Banksy performed similar stunts in the Louvre and New York's MoMA and Metropolitan Museum amongst other institutions, from art galleries to natural history museums. (Banksy, *Wall and Piece*, London, Century, 2006, pp. 169-186)

contrasted with suggestions of creative public rebellion: tags and stickers covered lamp posts and a bus stop timetable, a recovered "No Cruising Zone" street sign was amended with the "No" crossed out, while a rubbish bin was covered in tags. A rooftop within Buchanan's painting was adorned with a miniature graffiti piece by Askew One (a tribute to deceased American artist Nekst), symbolic of the urban exploration of graffiti writers, but also suggesting a less intrusive presence in its more peripheral placement. These elements mimicked the open discourse that unsanctioned urban art creates in cityscapes and illustrated a clear point of difference from the sanctioned and commoditised aspects of the display. They suggested the necessary tactics utilised to create art without permission, from the quick dissemination of stickers and tags, to the daring conquer of hard-to-access fringe spaces. These contrived interventions occupied spaces that were taken rather than those granted to sanctioned murals. Yet these were less intrusive and confronting than might have been witnessed outside the museum, suggesting more subtle interventions and disruptions. This was not a city that had lost control (due to natural forces or civil disobedience), but one in which graffiti and street art had been assimilated into the margins of its make-up. Such a construction was a necessary reflection of the museum setting and the exhibition's celebration of the potential of graffiti and street art as vibrant contributions to cityscapes around the world.

Above the Springsteen "living room", Christchurch artists Wongi "Freak" Wilson and Ikarus (who, along with Jacob Yikes, provided a local presence amongst the headline artists, placing Christchurch artists alongside the perhaps higher profile out-of-town artists) collaborated on a production of self-portraits flanked on either side by bursting graffiti pieces **(Fig. 6.37)**. Rather than suggesting an illicit act or uninvited addition, the large wall painting referenced graffiti's outsider nature and utilised the unfamiliar setting of a cultural institution to play on the perceptions of graffiti art and artists. Wilson and Ikarus' work provided a reminder of the artists' percieved outsider status, albeit turning such a judgement back on the audience in an acknowledgement of their rising public profiles. The realistic portraits and vibrant graffiti pieces highlighted the potential to enliven urban environments. In Wilson's portraits, the artists presented themselves as large looming outsiders, whose gestures engaged and challenged the audience below. While Freak's paint smeared index finger pointed at the crowd, turning the gaze back on the audience as if inspecting ants in a jar, Ikarus' raised middle finger was masked behind pixelated squares, an intentionally futile censor, the confronting and suggestive salute to critics of graffiti art and its validity inside a cultural institution remained obvious, even if unexpectedly brazen for such a venue. While the figures were cloaked in a black background, Ikarus' graffiti pieces exploded forward in bold pinks, blues, reds and oranges, giving a physical and spatial quality to the image, but also creating a strong contrast between a lively vibrancy and a confronting

menace.[85] Despite the backgrounds of many of the artists painting the museum walls, the local artists provided the most traditional example of graffiti writing amongst the diversity of the large wall paintings.[86] However, directly underneath the self-portraits, another space presented an explicit but loaded celebration of graffiti writing and provided a direct connection to Christchurch's street culture within this most unexpected location.

A grimy, raucous, paint-splattered alleyway decorated by dozens of Christchurch artists from the city's relatively brief graffiti and street art history provided the most explicit acknowledgment of the rebellious roots of graffiti and street art within *Rise* **(Figs. 6.38, 6.39)**, while also bringing the traditionally outsider local graffiti culture inside one of the city's oldest institutions.[87] The alleyway was not a recreation of a specific location, but a generic peripheral urban space populated with an amalgam of specific references. Perhaps the most contentious and challenging space of the exhibition, the alleyway provided a lively point of difference from the relatively ordered remainder of the show.[88] Not as immediately visible as the other spaces, the alleyway was largely discovered through exploration and provided a suggestion of the unsanctioned appearance of graffiti and street art in marginal, liminal-use urban spaces rather than the confrontational placement within a more visible setting. The "bombing" of the alleyway divested the presence of graffiti from the disruption of private, commercial and civic use, much like the graffiti in Buchanan's street scene, which similarly occupied more "out of the way" spaces. The alleyway was a representation of the type of urban spaces that most people would deem unattractive and dangerous, but which serve as enticing playgrounds for opportunistic uninvited artists.

While the show's larger wall paintings and exhibited items were afforded a defined independence and acknowledgement, the alleyway's jostling arrangement of voices reflected a truly collective, and even competitive make-up. The dense layering added to the alleyway's challenging nature; the sensory overload of the space was coupled with the popular associations made with tags and less grandiose graffiti, leaving viewers exhilarated, overwhelmed and/or uncomfortable. Tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters provided a roll call of successive generations of Christchurch graffiti and street artists who

[85] It is interesting to note that both the portraits and graffiti pieces can be seen as representations of the artists, the portraits a physical depiction, the graffiti names a suggested presence, an interesting conflation of the changing status of often invisible graffiti writers.
[86] While Drapl's work retained the element of letter forms, and Berst and Yikes' works both exhibited elements of graffiti spirit, they were both closer to post-graffiti in appearance. The Ikarus and Freak pieces were the only examples amongst the hall's big works that displayed the centrality of the name in graffiti writing culture.
[87] A reminder of the traditional display techniques of museum was evident in a cabinet display in the alleyway of a graffiti writer's tools, from a range of spray cans, nozzles, marker pens, and a black book, presenting the craft of the graffiti writer in a display mode fitting a museum.
[88] Despite its challenging appearance, museum staff noted that the alleyway had proven the most popular spot for visitors to pose for photographs inside the *Rise* exhibition.

were brought in to contribute by curators Freak and Ikarus.[89] Presented with spray paint, markers and stickers, the artists were given the chance to leave their mark in the most unlikely of settings. Their contributions imbued the project with an air of authenticity as a real reflection of the city's urban art cultures, despite the inherent difficulties in constructing histories in a field as competitive, volatile, illegal, anonymous and ephemeral as graffiti.[90] This local story was recreated layer upon layer; the earliest chapters covered by successive generations (only a handful of earlier works were deemed off limits to ensure they remained in the alley's final appearance), suggesting the passing of time condensed into a matter of weeks. Viewers who had not witnessed the alleyway's production could only speculate on the names and images that had gone onto the walls only to be covered in the following days. In its layered construction, it was a faithful replication of the ephemerality of graffiti and street art.[91] Yet even if it appeared chaotic, the alleyway was a controlled and curated production, rather than an invasion, the contributing artists and graffiti writers were invited into this unexpected setting.

The narrow space was filled with spray paint, ink, stickers, stencils, paste-ups and even magnetic fridge magnets glued to a window, displaying the wide variety of the city's visual street culture. Covered from top to bottom, the doorways, windows, ventilation boxes, drain pipes, staircases, rubbish bins, lights, and decorative power boxes were all utilised by contributors. Tags spilled onto the floor, faces were drawn on street lamps and even a chain link fence panel propped against a corner was adorned with a paste up rosette by the Band Aid Bandits awarding the *Rise* show "Best Museum Exhibit".[92] The earliest layer, featuring a recreation of the *Ghostbusters* symbol once found in Lyttelton that many recount as their earliest encounter with graffiti, along with amalgams of early punk, anarchist graffiti and latrinalia (toilet or lavatory graffiti, a term developed in the mid-1960s by folklorist Alan Dundes[93]) from slogans to phallic doodles, was created using house paint and hardware store spray paint with original nozzles to recreate the appearance of early styles.[94] These layers were progressively covered

[89] Although most artists who contributed to the alleyway had backgrounds in un-permissioned graffiti and street art, some of the contributors had transitioned into largely sanctioned working careers, such as Yikes, Ikarus and Freak.
[90] Throughout the process of creating the alleyway, co-curator Ikarus expressed disbelief at being able to paint graffiti inside the museum, admitting to fears the museum might change their mind at any second.
[91] Some early pieces in the alleyway space were left visible as a mark of historical respect and importance, such as the Ghostbusters logo, Lurq's alien character and a graffiti writer roll call by Jungle.
[92] The rosette was a knowing wink to the Bandits' "Best Demo" paste-up on the site of the Grand Chancellor Hotel in 2012. The "Best Museum" rosette was eventually acquired by the Canterbury Museum as part of their permanent collection.
[93] Alan Dundes, "Here I Sit – A Study of American Latrinalia", 1966, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/kas034-010.pdf, accessed March 15, 2016
[94] Punk is increasingly recognised as an influence on contemporary graffiti and street art; both stylistically and for artists who feel a connection to punk culture's DIY rebellion and embrace of anarchy. Babington has noted the roots of this influence might be found in a line of political graffiti that "stems from the UK-punk scene of

by the stylistic developments of graffiti and street art into the new Millennium. Writers, including veterans Jungle, Pest5 and Lurq, amongst newer generations, left tags, throw-ups, characters and more elaborate pieces, while various street artists added to the variety of imagery and techniques. While some examples were recreated from photographs, or from memories inspired by other examples on the wall, others were altogether new creations. Such recreations were provided extra context by the museum setting, where authenticity is an important aspect of collection. There were no overt references to specific political or social issues, something to perhaps be expected within the mediated setting. Stencils by Metal (his cartoon animal heavy metal band declaring "Death to false metal") and Porta, and paste-ups by Dr Suits, filled the walls with animals, robots, sharks and cartoon-styled characters alongside the sea of names, while also illustrating the number of techniques and styles utilised by artists and writers. Characters, like Lurq's blue alien, Jacob Yikes' tentacle-armed boy, Porta's tiny skateboarder rolling along a window frame, paste-ups of Dr Suits and Tess Sheerin's gesso-release twisted horse, added a figurative presence that was only suggested by the array of names. The dense mist of names, characters and messages allowed the audience to investigate every nook and cranny, revealing playful, unintentional and interesting juxtapositions. Porta's stencilled shark swam ominously across the concrete wall **(Fig. 6.40)**, weaving through the spray painted graffiti, suggesting the depth and density of layers. The alleyway was presented as an example of the transformative and enveloping effects of graffiti and street art in an urban environment, suggesting that while such visual noise was difficult for some, it could also be vibrant and interesting in a re-contextualised setting. The alleyway, surrounded by the examples of wall painting, was a reminder that graffiti and street art tread a complicated terrain between the rebellious conquest of urban space and the sanctioned decoration of cityscapes, a reality that was obvious outside the museum.

Rise was a wide-ranging and accessible celebration of graffiti and street art. Conceived by Shaw as a blockbuster film rather than a piece of theatre, it largely avoided critique of the culture in favour of introducing an audience, perhaps largely unaware of the diversity of graffiti and street art to a range of art and artists. Shaw declared in a 2015 interview: "The visual art world is the last bastion of artistic elitism. The theatre has the cinema and classical music has pop but visual art, until now didn't have that popularist equivalent. Street art is growing exponentially across the world and is building to fill that gap. Oi YOU! was conceived to simply aid that process."[95] It is interesting however, to consider also that graffiti and street art have long been viewed as alternatives to art world elitism through their guerrilla existence, and the growing popularity noted by Shaw, most explicitly found in sanctioned

the late 1970s in which the stencilled names of anarchist bands, such as London's Crass, were used to propagate the group's music and political persuasions." (Babington, *Space Invaders*, p. 29)

[95] Zammit, "Oi YOU! Street Art', in *No Cure*, p. 102

projects and gallery exhibitions, might also be seen to distance these cultures from their anti-institutional, subversive roots. As a popular approach the exhibition was a success, drawing the biggest attendance in the Canterbury Museum's history with over 200,000 visitors, from children to senior citizens, over the four month run.[96] Yet, while the exhibition served to champion the global status of graffiti and street art as celebrated and accessible art movements, a subversive act by an outsider would make an appearance, drawing together Christchurch's political post-quake landscape with graffiti and street art's rebellious interventionist nature, further highlighting the complexities *Rise* had to navigate. Without permission, local artist Cubey hung a small, framed satirical cartoon of Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee dressed as Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini, entitled *Brunolini (Civil Assault Continued)* (2013) **(Fig. 6.41)**, inside the exhibition's street scene.[97] The work's placement inside the exhibition and the specific political content, apparently drawing inspiration from newspaper cartoons, provided a reminder of the potential of graffiti and street art to engage with social and political discourses, but also highlighted the show's intentional lack of reference to the relationship between street art and the city's earthquake experience. Perhaps expectedly, the work was quickly removed, a reminder of the inability of the show to truly exhibit the rebellious and critical aspects of street art and culture.

Rise was not a story of the Christchurch earthquakes, the art produced on the streets in response, or the role of the post-quake city as a specific muse for artists, but instead a popular and accessible celebration of a wide variety of graffiti and street art that was staged in the city.[98] The ubiquitous elements of Christchurch's post-quake setting; orange road cones, hurricane fencing and deconstructed buildings, were all conspicuous by their absence. Explicit and suggested references to post-earthquake Christchurch were present in various works, most notably in the images of re-animated red zone houses in Ian Strange's *Final Act*, but also Eno's architectural structures and the recognisable over-sized sticking plaster pasted over painted cracks in the alleyway by the Band-Aid

[96] Uncredited, "Rise exhibition most successful in Museum's history", January 27, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/78/rise-exhibition-most-successful-in-museums-history, accessed September 19, 2014; Uncredited, "RISE attracts more than 200,000 visitors", March 4, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/79/rise-attracts-more-than-200000-visitors, accessed September 19, 2014. The show also resulted in the Best Exhibition over $20,000 prize for the Canterbury Museum at the 2014 Museums Aotearoa awards. (Uncredited, April 4, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/83/award-winning-achievement-for-canterbury-museum, accessed, January 2, 2016)

[97] Again, the hanging of a framed work in an art gallery was surely a nod to Banksy, who has performed similar pranks in The Louvre in Paris, and both The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

[98] Oi YOU! previously staged events in Nelson (2011) and Adelaide (2013), reflecting the intention of the festival to be focussed on the celebration and spread of graffiti and street art rather than specific to Christchurch's earthquake experience and recovery. The Canterbury Museum had also staged *Quake City* as an "earthquake" exhibition and saw *Rise* as a chance to investigate a new field.

Bandits. Yet such references largely avoided the investigation of the post-quake city as an influence, both physically and conceptually, on graffiti and street art. The staging of *Final Act* in a separate gallery disconnected Strange's work from the street scene and the suggestion of urban space. The street scene, with buildings intact, projected a sense of security that had entirely dissipated in Christchurch's central city. The alleyway's reconstruction of the local history of graffiti and street art spread back beyond the city's earthquake experience giving little acknowledgement of the post-quake environment. It was instead presented as a space familiar to any city around the world, leaving the Band-Aid Bandits' sticking plaster removed from the cracked and broken context that imbued their original gestures with much of their meaning. But while the exhibition intentionally made little direct reference to post-earthquake Christchurch as a unique setting for graffiti and street art, in its popularity, *Rise* did suggest a possible change in public attitude towards these forms. While the comparative stillness and security of the museum provided a marked difference from the constantly shifting environment of post-earthquake Christchurch, *Rise* also extended into the streets. While the public component of *Rise*, the "Big Wall" murals, announced the presence of the world-wide contemporary muralist movement as a significant aspect of the city's post-quake appearance, it also unavoidably raised the connection between these forms, marked by a connection to anti-authority art movements and the post-disaster landscape as an evolving site of control and contestation.

Rising from the ground up: "Public" art, the muralist movement and street art festivals

If street art at the turn of the millennium was largely defined by unexpected and often unsanctioned interventions that served as urban in-situ jokes, the most pervasive development within graffiti and street art in the twenty-first century has been the emergence of the contemporary muralist movement. This development has been most prominent in the festivals and events that have afforded artists the opportunity to expand their work in scale, accessibility and technique, reaching more visible and wide ranging locations without the risk involved in guerrilla production. This mural movement has exhibited different backgrounds, influences, and intentions from other contemporary public art practices. While inevitably related to the long traditions of mural painting, many of the practitioners have backgrounds in guerrilla graffiti and street art, which layers their work with a specific context. While the social commentary that has historically informed muralism remains evident, the influence of graffiti and street art is evident in spirit and appearance. In operating without permission, or recognising of the potential in doing so, these artists have developed personal styles and specific readings of how their work engages with public space and a broad public audience. But in its growth,

this new movement has also exhibited significant differences from the expectations of graffiti and street art as interventionist practices. *Juxtapoz* editor M. Revelli has remarked that the rise and development of contemporary muralism reflects a shift in both the definition and perception of graffiti and street art:

> You have seen the movement unfurl across the blogosphere and artists become staples of the art world: European mural and street art festivals transforming cities into unique hybrids of old world meets contemporary "street" art. And this is where it becomes a bit fuzzy. We are not seeing "street" art in the traditional sense that Banksy documented in *Exit Through the Gift Shop* or the illegal pieces that have popped up in places like San Francisco, Brooklyn, London, or Berlin over the past 15 years. This is new, and it feels very different.[99]

It is different, as Revelli notes, in many respects from the often smaller interventions that have driven urban art's unsanctioned presence in cities. But its difference from established public art, which Revelli argues for many "refers to a specific kind of sanctioned art in the public domain that is made with a certain intention and scope agreed upon by both artist and governmental body", is perhaps built on the continuing influence of graffiti and street art's rebellious roots.[100]

However, despite this lineage, for some the contemporary muralist movement is a distinct development that is difficult to define. Spanish artist Aryz has highlighted the differences between contemporary muralism and street art (which he describes as "jokes of the moment"):

> Of course we share the same playground as street art, but it has nothing else in common. What happens is that the words (street art) are so big that they have room for a lot of interpretations. Because what is street art? … I don't know, there are different words for what is being done now, some people call it contemporary muralist [sic], which is not bad. The good thing about the term "street art" is that it has very good reception to the common public. Contemporary muralism has certain barriers for the public, it seems a bit more difficult. But I know if we (artists) find a term, as we know each other more or less, it would [be] easy to call it that way.[101]

Aryz suggests the role of the artist as the key distinguishing element between contemporary murals and often anonymous street art interventions, but even so the definition remains difficult, and as the Spanish artist admits: "There is no historical perspective to understand the importance or relevance of what is going on at the moment."[102] Many artists, while conceiving of their mural work as distinct from unsanctioned street art, also continue to affirm their backgrounds in unsanctioned practice. This

[99] M Revelli, "Introduction", *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, p. 8
[100] Ibid.
[101] *Street Art: Aryz X Finerats*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1g0JzKwQtc, accessed September 22, 2014
[102] Evan Pricco, "Aryz", in *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.144, January 2013, pp. 47-49

difficulty is reflected by the various concerns and approaches within the new mural movement; for every artist sharing the opinion of Aryz, another will prefer alternate descriptions.

Rather than challenging the control of and access to city walls, artists are now able to work in larger spaces, more prominent locations, with more time, and within a forum that allows them to investigate their work without the spectre of many of the challenges and limitations of illegal production. Instead of climbing fences and operating in the dark, artists are now afforded the relative luxury of automated work platforms, such as cherry pickers and scissor lifts, scaffolding and almost unlimited supplies of paint. While the work of sanctioned graffiti and street art muralists is concerned with the audience they seek to engage, they do so in a variety of ways, from political or community-minded themes to the continued development of individual styles and visual languages. These artists often exhibit in their work the relationship to public space and a public audience developed through their graffiti or street art backgrounds, from the themes and styles to the conception of how their work utilises and occupies such spaces. Yet this is not to say they become purely decorative, they act with and against the visual landscape and deal with multifarious issues in often pluralistic ways, treating the city as their primary canvas rather than an alternative to studio practice (as contemporary artists working in public might find it necessary to do). The perception of graffiti and street art as illegal and anonymous interventions has been joined by a growing celebrity amongst artists working in sanctioned and higher profile projects, and it is the popularity of street art and mural festivals that have helped increase this exposure.

A swell of graffiti and street art festivals continue to appear around the world, often in unexpected locations. Festivals such as *See No Evil* in Bristol, England, Mexico's *All City Canvas*, *NuArt* in the town of Stavanger in Norway, Atlanta's *Living Walls*, Miami's *Primary Flight*, *POW! WOW! Hawaii*, and *Fame* in Grottaglie, Italy, have allowed artists the opportunity to work in large, adventurous, and supported ways, transforming cityscapes and gaining public exposure.[103] Events of various sizes, profiles and formats have emerged with regularity. In 2014 India hosted its first urban art festival, *St.ART Delhi*, while Tahiti also established a festival and competition in 2014.[104] *Juxtapoz* writer Austin McManus described the incredulous reactions to his South Pacific trip to cover the event, with people expressing fears that the appearance of graffiti and street art would spoil the island's natural beauty. However when he arrived, McManus found local graffiti writers had "beat everyone to it", illustrating the

[103] These street art festivals have followed the occurrence of graffiti painting events, often held as part of wider hip hop culture projects, and legal graffiti walls. However the ability of these newer incarnations to fill multiple sites across cityscapes is unique,

[104] Jaime Rojo and Steven Harrington, "India's First Street Art Fest and the Largest Gandhi Portrait Ever", *Huffington Post*, April 6, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-rojo-steven-harrington/start-dehli-2014_b_5441294.html, accessed July 28, 2014

spreading influence and reach of the urban art movement.[105] Graffiti and street art festivals and events have also become a part of New Zealand's public arts event landscape. Taupo's annual *Graffiato* festival, *All Fresco* on Auckland's famed K Road, New Plymouth's *Get Up*, Kawerau's *Street Legal* and the *Dunedin Street Art* festival, staged for the first time in 2014 and including a handful of notable international participants such as Pixel Pancho from Italy, Dal East from China and Phelgm from the United Kingdom, have all been staged since 2010, many with recurring regularity and contributing to the visibility of graffiti and street art across Aotearoa.[106]

This array of locations provides a startling mixture of juxtapositions, from old European architecture in rural townships splashed with colour, characters and commentary, to more dense and sprawling urban cities. The engagement with these locations varies; from works dotting disparate sites that reward the exploration of a location, to the complete transformation of a defined area, as in Bristol's *See No Evil*. A sense of variety even extends to the organisation and funding of these events, from the punk rebellion of the privately funded *Fame* festival, to the politically supported *Nuart* in Norway.[107] Yet despite the increasing popularity, the concept of graffiti and street art taking over city streets has met with opposition. *Nuart* founder Martyn Reed, explained that when applying for funding from the Norwegian Arts Council, the application was rejected when the words graffiti and street art were mentioned.[108] When Reed funded the event through a loan and it was hugely successful, he recalled how: "…the Arts Council and local politicians started being supportive. Although I don't think they're as cynical here as elsewhere, it's not going to win them an election by supporting what we do; but their support is not going to harm them."[109] The acceptance of *Nuart* in Stavanger also points to the lack of established stigma attached to urban art as compared to countries where the rebellious roots of the culture, and especially graffiti writing, remain vilified. While many events ensure a distance between these connections and emphasise the positive benefits to host venues in the hope of gaining both traction and a change of perception, some attempt to retain an attachment to urban rebellion. *Fame* founder Angelo Milano has explained that the festival takes a 'just do it' approach: "…most of

[105] Austin McManus, "Graffiti in Tahiti: Ono'u Graffiti Festival", *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.164, September 2014, pp. 114-116

[106] The *Dunedin Street Art* Festival provided an example of the divergence of sanctioned wall painting and the traditions of unsanctioned street art, when the appearance of uninvited stencils near some of the mural works were bemoaned by the festival organisers.

[107] *Fame* is privately funded by organizer Angelo Milano, and throughout its existence, Milano has attempted to retain a DIY approach, which has seen a number of works created without permission alongside the numerous works which have been granted building owner's permission. The festival also maintains a tense relationship with local government. (Evan Pricco, "Fame Festival", *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 48-61)

[108] Notably, a forum at the 2015 *Nuart* festival considered the place of activism within the contemporary muralist movement.

[109] M. Revelli and Evan Pricco, "Nuart", *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp.76-89

the pieces are on private property. Most of the time we ask permission from the owner. When we don't know the owner we just go for it, assuming that some crazy shit will happen. When the wall is public, we go for it too, knowing full well the police would show up at some point."[110] *Fame* is unique in this approach, with many festivals and events necessarily operating in more strictly legal ways due to the need for funding and civic support, which can still prove problematic.

Bologna based artist Blu courted controversy when he was invited to paint a large mural for the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's *Art in the Streets* exhibition. Although known for work that often explicitly raises and critiques political and social issues, Blu's depiction of coffins draped in American flags, painted in view of a veteran's hospital, was deemed too offensive by MOCA director Jeffrey Deitch, who had the mural painted over.[111] Such concessions and disputes are a reality of producing sanctioned work, but also illustrate the potential power of the spirit of urban art when combined with the large scale presence of legal productions. Deitch himself had ruminated on the impact of this new level of exposure and identity, asking in his introduction to the publication that accompanied *Art in the Streets*: "Will the popular success of street art dilute its edge, or will artists be able to use their high-profile platform to advocate personal freedom, social change, and an expansion of consciousness to an even larger audience?"[112] The answer may have been evident in Deitch's decision to remove Blu's mural, a controlling body censoring the message in the interest of avoiding controversy. While artists can still engage with social and political issues, the relationship with authorising agents will leave such works constantly facing potential censorship. While such a threat remains to work produced without permission, which is often quickly painted out, the ability of unsanctioned artists freely to produce work is not curtailed to the same degree as sanctioned work, especially in light of their quick digital dissemination and resulting preservation in an electronic form, affording a potentially larger audience. While sanctioned murals and urban art festivals have extended the presence and influence of graffiti and street art in the form of murals and wall paintings as a visually impressive form of public art, they have also illustrated the inherent challenge in maintaining this visibility and a connection to the intrinsically rebellious spirit of the cultures that have created this movement.

As the third anniversary of the February earthquake approached, *Rise,* along with *From the Ground Up,* drawing from the growing popularity of these events (as well as raising the same complexities), increased the public visibility of sanctioned graffiti and street art in Christchurch's physical landscape

[110] Pricco, "Fame Festival", *Juxtapoz*, n.136, pp. 48-61
[111] David Carrier and Joachim Pissaro, *Wild Art*, London/New York, Phaidon, 2013, p. 28. It is notable that the mural was still included in the *Art in the Streets* publication, although the large scale photograph made no mention of the saga.
[112] Deitch, "Art in the Streets", in *Art in the Streets*, pp. 10-15

and popular imagination, revitalising an array of the city's many blank walls and empty spaces with images that presented diverse themes and styles. While separate events, the shared concepts, close locations, similar timing and overlap of artists ensured *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* were bound together in public imagination. Distinction between the two events was largely overlooked by the public, and eventually their kinship resulted in a shared media profile.[113] While *Rise* extended its presentation of the spectrum of contemporary urban art by pairing the "Big Wall" murals with the museum exhibition, *From the Ground Up* focussed on graffiti and street art exclusively as a public space art form, concentrating its presence on the city's vacant walls. Both *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* seized upon the landscape of post-earthquake Christchurch as an opportunity to illustrate the possibilities within urban art as a popular public art with distinct and unique concerns and approaches. The two events' titles referenced the changes and growth of graffiti and street art's identity and stature, but also suggested an acknowledgement of the state of the city and the potential role urban art could play in the reinvigoration of the setting. As *Rise* organiser George Shaw reflected:

> I think pre-quake… it would have been very difficult to produce a show like *Rise*… I think what happened with the quake not only were the buildings levelled but I think to one degree or another people's mentality was levelled as well, people realised that what they had to do was do it for themselves… everything was gone. They literally cleared spaces, produced in those spaces entertainment for themselves… the authorities were busy doing other stuff, so people had to make it happen for themselves and I think with that mentality people started to realise this is cool, its good, actually it's not a bad thing and I think that opened people's minds to the murals to be put up across the city… the city, because of its broken state, it makes an amazing backdrop for these kind of works.[114]

Christchurch presented a perfect mix of a new-found willingness to accept a variety of creative initiatives, and a unique physical setting: Yet such a physical setting afforded not only opportunity, but also a discourse around what such events could achieve in a landscape ripe for beautification and the commentary so often created and implied by unsanctioned street art. Although graffiti and street art's presence has been noted throughout this work in an array of disparate examples and settings, *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* provided condensed activity, importantly not within wider arts or cultural programmes, but specifically under the banner of graffiti and street art as public art.

Staged in the early weeks of December 2013, *From the Ground Up* was presented as a "local public art project" that would see "Christchurch city revitalised by large-scale artworks produced by artists from

[113] Both the Oi YOU! smart phone application and printed material for the museum exhibition mapped both *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* works together.
[114] *Rise Festival Christchurch New Zealand Video*, shot and edited by Selina Miles, additional still photography by Luke Shirlaw, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhujxbpD6nY, accessed July 15, 2014

Christchurch and all over New Zealand."[115] While Rise had a higher profile and support from the City Council, *From the Ground Up*, as the name suggested, took a grassroots approach, with a roster of established and up-and-coming artists producing work in a range of sites, from large prominent walls to more secluded zones that rewarded inquisitive explorers. Conceived and created by Christchurch artists Fluro, Jacob Yikes and Leeya Warrander, *From the Ground Up* was "coordinated by artists for artists" and drew from the community of graffiti and street artists in Christchurch and across New Zealand, from Auckland to Southland. Askew One, Oche, Gary Silipa, Benjamin Work, Johnny 4-Higher (Pest5), Elliott Francis Stewart (Deus), Mica Still, Kost, Lady Diva, Phat1, Berst, Misery, Rita Vovna, Deow, Drypnz and BMD travelled to Christchurch to paint alongside local artists and crews, including Yikes, Fluro, Ikarus, Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Lurq, Sulk, Morepork, Xpres One and more, showcasing the existing and emerging talent within the city and across the country.[116] The event's stated aim was to "support and facilitate local artists to further develop their skills", highlighting existing talent but also providing an opportunity for younger and emerging local artists to gain visibility, exposure and opportunity, fostering the city's urban art community, while establishing and strengthening connections with artists from around New Zealand.[117] A sense of community and collaboration amongst the artists was a strong aspect of the event, both in the work produced, but also in the social nature of their production.[118]

Rise's fifteen "Big Walls" presented an equally diverse range of works across the city, although in more high-profile and singular examples. George Shaw explained that the intention of *Rise*, and specifically the murals, was to help turn Christchurch into "the street art capital of the southern hemisphere… In a short time, we could have a beautiful surprise around every corner, turning blank walls in beautiful vistas."[119] In this hope, Shaw explicitly refers to a particular view of "street art", one distinct from the more rebellious interventions. While *From the Ground Up* was built around New Zealand artists, *Rise* had a more global flavour, with high profile international artists brought to Christchurch, notably ROA from Belgium, Australian artists Rone, Lister, Sofles, Drapl, Beastman and Vans the Omega, as well as New Zealand artists Eno and Owen Dippie, joined by several artists who had also contributed to *From the Ground Up*, such as Askew One, BMD, and local artists Jacob Yikes, Ikarus and Wongi "Freak" Wilson. The *Rise* event was pre-empted by Vans the Omega's mural on the fringe of the Christchurch

[115] http://www.fromthegroundup.org.nz/sample-page/, accessed August 7, 2014
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] While *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* were staged across similar spaces and time frames, shared artists (Askew One and BMD produced work for both events, while Vans the Omega, Sofles and Drapl (Quench) also contributed to *From the Ground Up* spaces while in Christchurch for *Rise*), and advertising (the Oi YOU! *Rise* smart phone application and printed information included the *From the Ground Up* murals) they also exhibited differences in terms of conception and intention.
[119] Charlie Gates, "Banksy street art features in festival", *The Press*, p. A3

Polytechnic Institute of Technology campus, produced in September 2013, several months prior to the opening of the museum exhibition and the remainder of the "Big Walls". The work, tucked in a tight alleyway entrance to the campus, was colourful and angular, with two disks filled with shapes and patterns suggesting the passing of time, from panels of sweeping wind and rain, to the echo of clock faces. The Australian artist explained that the work was created without detailed preparatory drawings: "I don't have a drawing or a colour map. I feed off the environment, people coming past and the surroundings to create the work. I just let go and go for it."[120] This method ensures the influence of the specific setting on not only the work's reception but also its creation, highlighting public space as both a physical and social influence, a reflection of the often spontaneous engagement of urban art with a cityscape, again highlighting the street over studio approach, rather than the heavily planned and curated approach of much public art.

The variety of spaces occupied by the "Big Walls" illustrated the state of flux across the city. Some murals were situated amidst vacant spaces and deconstructed buildings, such as BMD's *Blueprint for Christchurch* in the largely empty eastern end of City Mall, while others adorned active businesses, providing lively embellishments to sites, such as the detailed, geometric collaboration that drew on a range of natural elements by Vans the Omega and Beastman and Eno's evocative scene at opposite entrances to a Sydenham mall, and Daek's blue skinned female figure on an inner city café **(Figs. 6.42-6.44)**.[121] This wide-reaching presence illustrated the contrasts of the recovering city. However, most of the murals, both from *Rise* and *From the Ground Up*, occupied the abundant empty spaces around the central city, acting both as activations, but also unavoidably temporary, their status entangled with the fate of the surfaces they occupied.

The *Rise* "Big Walls" provided examples of the varied styles and interests evident amongst the artists and illustrated a range of concerns relative to their setting, from the specific experience of post-quake Christchurch, to more general interests in urban space. Faces, figures, animals and the population of space were common, from Askew One's dual portraits of a local waitress *Kristen* in Cathedral Junction, to the figurative elements of the Vans the Omega and Beastman collaboration in Sydenham, and the female figures by William Daek, Drapl and Sofles at various points around the city **(Figs. 6.45, 6.46)**.[122] Melbourne artist Rone's haunting portrait on a brick wall on the outside of Cathedral Junction, where

[120] Ibid.
[121] The wall was re-painted by American artist Buff Monster as part of *Spectrum* in 2014.
[122] In an interesting public discussion, an independent mural of a reclining female figure by Australian artist Order **(Appendix 1: Fig. A21)**, commissioned by an inner city "gentleman's club" was produced in close vicinity to Sofles' purple female figure, the two works distinct but clearly displaying similar motifs. However, Order's mural was chastised as being in bad taste, largely due to its placement on a building of a morally-divisive business rather than any specific formal qualities.

The Press building once stood, was representative of the artist's well known style, but the setting provided a subtle connection to loss and presence. The portrait of Australian model Teresa Oman **(Fig. 6.47)**, her face partially covered by a fern leaf, was rendered in a washed out white paint, which created the appearance of a ghostly visage, fitting for a location which suffered loss and avoidance for a long time. The image appeared as if it had been there forever, a witness to the changes that had occurred before its production. The image drew on Rone's interest in locating what Schacter describes as the "friction point between beauty and decay, creating an iconic form of urban art with a strongly emotional bent."[123] Within the ramshackle appearance of Christchurch's inner city, particularly the nearby damaged Cathedral, the image could be read as a personification of the city's experience. While these figures and faces provided a sense of presence, other works connected artists existing interests with the unique surroundings. The side of the Canterbury Museum was painted by Belgian artist ROA **(Fig. 6.48)**. The wall was adorned with a huge moa skeleton, a playful kiwi reclining on the skeleton's back and a small fantail perched on one of the supporting wires connecting the birds to the display culture of the institution and perhaps the haunted and hollowed state of the city, all in ROA's signature combination of black and white aerosol and house paint. ROA's black and white animals have appeared in cities around the world, always connecting with local and native animal life. The choice of native birds was indicative of this connection, but his choice of a moa skeleton also provided both a continuation of the theme of mortality evident throughout his work as well as a reference to the museum as an institution of display culture.[124] His work reflects, as Caleb Neelon and Michael Wilson note, the "aesthetic of naturalistic drawings more than a graffiti sensibility, even when painted on hundred-foot-long walls", and as such provided a fitting addition to the museum exterior. The stoic black and white image juxtaposed playful new world street art with a monumental dignity, yet again highlighting the expansive variety evident in contemporary graffiti and street art muralism.[125]

Birds also provided the central motif for Australian artist Lister's *Rise* wall. Overlooking a car park from the side of an inner city gym and surrounded by signs of earthquake damage, Lister's energetic seagulls swoop across the expanse of wall in chaotic bursts of paint.[126] Lister's wall displayed all the traits of the Australian artist's signature work, jagged lines and splashes and sprays of paint forming a disjointed image. Lister has noted how working on the streets provides a sense of freedom: "giving me the space to be adventurous with my line", illuminating the formal impact of working in open

[123] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 370
[124] Caleb Neelon and Michael Wilson, "Artist Biographies", in *Art in the Streets*, p. 312
[125] Ibid.
[126] Lister's work was initially facing the large mural *Giraffing Around* by Tess Sheerin, which was eventually destroyed when the building on which it was painted was demolished.

spaces with various media, from spray cans to rollers, to fire extinguishers charged with paint.[127] Schacter has noted that Lister's continued use of the streets as a site of production indicates a pursuit of more spontaneous practice, the artist viewing the street "as a place of action rather than reflection, a place where he can experiment through flow… where he can be spontaneous and loose, where he can work while having no expectations of either a positive or negative outcome."[128] Paint discharged from fire extinguishers lashed the wall including the trees lining the wall, and giant seagulls hovered across the surface, their form alternately fully developed and partially realised. The swooping movement a fitting echo of Lister's kinetic technique, perhaps sharing a kinship with Keating's *Concrete Propositions,* more than the refined work of other *Rise* artists.

The murals produced for *From the Ground Up* were also situated in a variety of locations across the inner city and nearby Sydenham, and similarly reflected a range of themes, although amidst this diversity, faces, figures and animals, and in particular, birdlife, were again prominent. Askew One's unavoidable *Paris* (2013) (produced in collaboration with Mark Henare) on Colombo Street in Sydenham provided a vibrant presence, while Elliott Francis Stewart's giant tui bird, majestically craning its head and surveying the surroundings of a Madras Street car park, surprised passers-by with its shiny cosmic detail and subtle placement within an unassuming location. Yikes' nightmarish landscape at the rear of an overgrown empty lot on the side of a revitalised Tuam Street building, rewarded investigation, with swirling details leading the viewer's eye across the dense surface and provided a fitting parallel world to the post-quake setting. Oche and Fluro's textual collaboration *We Got the Sunshine* (2013), visible to traffic passing along Madras Street, was both a popular culture reference, and a bright note to the wider city in its colourful transformation of a grey wall.[129] BMD's *Fox in Motion* (2013), as if a graphic, playful nod to the motion photography of Eadweard Muybridge, and Drypnz's figurative abstraction *Circle Fist Cuff* (2013), faced each other across an out of the way industrial car park on Lichfield Street **(Figs. 6.49-6.54)**, the graphic legibility of the BMD work a stark contrast to the more suggestive abstraction of Drypnz's painterly style. While these works were afforded varied visibility and exposure due to their locations, they all shared the use of the city's empty spaces, located on barren walls overlooking vacant lots and empty car parks, and in many cases, on

[127] Lister notably distinguishes between his studio and street practice, even working under different names, Lister on the street, while exhibiting gallery work as Anthony Lister. (Maximiliano Ruiz, *Walls & Frames – Fine Art from the Streets*, Berlin, Gestalten, 2011, p. 28)
[128] Schacter, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, p. 380
[129] The phrase was a reference to a lyric from the song *Sunshine* by New Zealand musicians Scribe and P-Money, the phrase also adopted by Fluro for her professional website; http://www.wegotsunshine.com/#/walls/, accessed March 13, 2016

buildings awaiting demolition.[130] As such these works might be seen more as temporary renewals rather than the part of the recovered city, their existence more peripheral than central.

While many murals focussed upon the artists' signature styles, thematic interests and self-created worlds, which often proved fitting in the post-quake landscape without specific references, several works from *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* did illustrate explicit connections to the post-quake city. Auckland artist Gary Silipa's *Rebuilding Christchurch* (2013) **(Fig. 6.55)** produced for *From the Ground Up*, ruminated on the changed city spread across two adjoining walls. The work's bright colours invited closer inspection of the scenes. On one wall, through parted curtains, the viewer was privy to a meeting of religious deities discussing how to fix Christchurch. On the adjacent wall, grey UFOs sent from those delegates hovered above the city, red beams of light zapping down from the vessels, illuminating and transforming the city's lost buildings into new visions, such as the Transitional Cathedral.[131] In City Mall, BMD's *Rise* wall, *Blueprint for Christchurch* (2013) **(Fig. 6.56)**, surrounded by a dusty vacant lot and semi-deconstructed buildings, depicted three folded preparatory drawings, each representing a work completed in Christchurch by the artists. The images not only providing information on the duo's other works spread around the city, but also a reference to the diagrammatic plans for the city's ongoing rebuild and recovery. *Blueprint for Christchurch* swapped the angular drawings of buildings of technical plans for BMD's collection of google eyed creatures, broken down with scientific detail. On the corner of Manchester Street and Gloucester Street, Johnny 4Higher produced an explicit reference to Christchurch as a post-disaster city, imbued with a personal touch due to the artist's Christchurch background **(Fig. 6.57)**. The dark image depicted the local figure of the Christchurch Wizard and a grieving female figure before the Anglican Cathedral, the ground between cracked open, the crevices spelling out the artist's graffiti moniker. The inclusion of the Cathedral and the evocative and moody tone of the work providing evidence of its intended statement as a type of eulogy for the city.

If *Rise* largely presented individual artists with defined spaces for their murals, *From the Ground Up* made use of several locations that were turned over to multiple artists, creating a collaborative juxtaposition of works, as if recreating the layered appearance of unsanctioned urban art.[132] Exposed and empty walls in vacant lots in Sydenham and along Fitzgerald Avenue on the fringe of the city

[130] BMD's *Fox in Motion* was demolished in August 2014 and Johnny 4Higher's work was covered up within several months of its creation in early 2014.
[131] Silipa's work was partially removed by 2014, only one wall remaining as the building on which it was painted was demolished.
[132] *Rise* did feature collaborative works, such as Beastman and Vans the Omega's Sydenham work, and Sofles and Quench, who together painted the plastic sheeting surrounding an inner city bar on Victoria Street. Yet, the majority of the *Rise* "Big Walls" presented artists' work more individually.

centre were allocated to groups of artists to produce a collective if not collaborative effect. Contributing artists painted alongside each other in large stretches of wall space, multiple works demanded individual attention, but created an impressive overall appearance in their collaborative transformation of otherwise desolate spaces. Although echoing the decoration of spaces such as the alleyway constructed inside the Canterbury Museum, rather than the competitive layering, artists were afforded defined spaces, creating a rolling gallery effect. In Sydenham, the walls surrounding an empty car park were filled with varied productions. Misery's playful cartoon characters inhabiting a fantastical scene open to narrative interpretation **(Figs. 6.58)**, while Berst's *God of the Forest* (2013) **(Fig. 6.59)** presented a burst of names, symbols and intricate interlocking details in golden yellow and brown hues. While Rita Vovna's painterly and textual work, and work by local artists Devos One, Morepork and Sulk created a further juxtaposition of styles **(Fig. 6.60)**. The variety on display was further embellished by a number of graffiti pieces on the shipping containers dotted around the fringe of the car park, creating an even more complete "takeover" of the space.

Not far away, another vacant lot on Sydenham's Colombo Street, wedged between small businesses, was transformed by an array of artists, including Yikes, Quench, Vans the Omega, Morepork, Ikarus, Benjamin Work and Mica Still **(Figs. 6.61-6.63)**. The surrounding concrete walls of the grassy space were adorned with a range of images, from Still's evocative, dreamlike wolves, to Work's iconic, reductive red, black and white imagery depicting historical migratory narratives from his Tongan heritage. A chicken wire fence separated the space from easy access, raising questions about the works' legitimacy for any viewer unaware of their participation in *From the Ground Up*. These spaces were filled with condensed contributions, but each artist was afforded defined space, creating a sense of order on the walls. Across the city on several vacant lots on Fitzgerald Avenue, artists were allocated rectangular spaces, the horizontal arrangement creating a parade of differing graffiti writing styles almost like the panels of a static train **(Figs. 6.64, 6.65)**.[133] The horizontal ordering of the work ensured the space could be perceived as a sanctioned project, the bright, bold and detailed graffiti a clear difference from the more chaotic appearance of unsanctioned graffiti. These spaces were not collaborations in the sense of a unified production; instead they displayed a collaborative approach to creating a sense of space that reflected the traditions of urban art, where spaces are covered in various works jostling for attention. These examples were not a privileged presentation of one work in singular space, but an illustration of the way urban art plays off its surroundings, both the built environment,

[133] By 2016, the Fitzgerald Avenue walls had been repainted by various artists (including From the Ground Up organiser Jacob Yikes), once again reflecting the state of flux of such spaces and a willingness to rejuvenate rather than preserve.

but also the other (sometimes pre-existing) art found in such spaces. These spaces allowed artists to work in close vicinity, feeding off each other and the pervading creative atmosphere.

From the Ground Up displayed the variety of practice and styles evident in the work of artists across New Zealand, and was a proud presentation of both post-graffiti painting and traditional graffiti writing, avoiding a sense of detachment from the writing culture that continues to be a driving influence on urban art.[134] Indeed, if *Rise*'s "Big Walls" apparently largely lacked the explicit presence of graffiti writing, *From the Ground Up* embraced it unabashedly.[135] Names and letter forms were equally as prominent as the characters, patterns and narratives of the large scale wall paintings, despite the potential alienation of at least part of the public audience often conditioned to dislike graffiti. The presence of graffiti writing was less notable across the *Rise* Big Walls, where the collaborative "Blackbook" mural by Wongi "Freak" Wilson and Ikarus was one of the few references **(Fig. 6.66)**. On the corner of Colombo Street and Hereford Street, Freak and Ikarus invited other artists to contribute to a massive open "blackbook". The artists transformed the angled wall into an open notebook in reference to the tradition of graffiti artists collecting tags and hand-styles from other writers. The exposed pages were then adorned with an array of signature images, from graffiti alphabets to various characters. ROA contributed a black and white pukeko bird, Thom Buchanan painted a street scene, local graffiti icon Jungle a piece and character, while Askew One and Sofles left graffiti pieces in the appearance of pencil sketches. Freak and Ikarus filled other spaces with a variety of images, including cartoon versions of the pair with Oi YOU!'s George Shaw and Shannon Webster, with the declaration that "Sometimes strange people make magic happen". The range of graffiti concepts were exemplified further by a burnt section of the book, revealing a "burner" on a preceding page.[136] The black book construction suggested the transformation of the city into a site of graffiti and street art. A playful transformation of one of the city's many blank walls into a unique aspect of urban art that also revealed the developing sense of community amongst the contributing artists. It was, in a sense, a pictorial story of the *Rise* event, as if preserving an important part of the city's graffiti history. The *Blackbook Wall* literally substituted a city wall with an element of graffiti culture, allowing artists to sign off on their time in the city. The ability to store and treasure a book was replaced with the

[134] In some cases, artists illustrated this sense of fluidity within their own work across the event, such as Benjamin Work, whose symbolic cultural iconography drawn from his Tongan heritage were juxtaposed with his graffiti writing under the moniker of Saves.

[135] Sofles and Drapl's collaborative production on Victoria Street featured their graffiti pieces, and when Sofles returned to Christchurch for *Spectrum* in 2014, he produced a large wall made up of a variety of graffiti writing styles on St Asaph Street.

[136] A "burner" is a term for a graffiti piece of impressive style, suggesting it 'burns' other examples.

inevitable ephemerality of a public space, but the gesture also opened the normally secretive and treasured possession of graffiti writers for public consumption.[137]

Both *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* notably increased the visibility of graffiti and street art murals around the city, highlighting the variety of styles and approaches of artists from across the globe, the country and the city. Adding colour and form, with impressive technical flourishes and both subtle and explicit references to the host setting, the murals were largely well received and added a new layer to the city's public art reputation. However, inevitably, even though these murals avoided public critique and transgression, working with building owners and with largely positive themes, the connection between graffiti and street art's unsanctioned roots was raised. The complexities of graffiti and street art's engagement with public space as both a form of public art and as a reminder of free thought and expression, became a topic of debate.

"But I hate tagging"[138]: The relationship between sanctioned and unsanctioned graffiti and street art

While celebrated by many, *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* also inevitably raised questions about the connection between the presentation of graffiti and street art and the appearance of uninvited "vandalism" around the shattered city, the juxtaposition in public space making the connection more overt than in the interior museum exhibition. While the museum had been careful to create a distance from unsanctioned graffiti and street art in its relationship with the *Rise* exhibition, the public murals, due to sharing physical space, drew inevitable comparison with such interventions. Media reports contrasted congratulatory stories about the bold sanctioned murals and the popular museum exhibition with questions about the appearance of unsanctioned art around the city, including examples attributed to visiting *Rise* artists **(Figs. 6.67-6.69)**. These events inevitably brought the relationship of the rebellious roots of graffiti and street art with the increasing sanctioned identity into public dialogue. In January 2014, *The Press* considered the connection between sanctioned street art and uninvited vandalism (specifically graffiti writing as opposed to "legitimate street art"):

[137] The *Blackbook Wall* was re-painted in early 2015 by Wilson and Ikarus **(Appendix 1: Fig. A22)**, this time with additional images by contributing artists from Oi YOU!'s *Spectrum* event, the follow up to *Rise.* The functional associations of the blackbook were retained, as if a new page had been turned to reflect the latter event.
[138] In the 2008 film Alter Ego, New Zealand artist Askew One recounts how people will often tell him that while they "love graffiti art", they hate "tagging". (Alter Ego: A Worldwide Documentary about Graffiti Writing, dir. Daniel Thouw, ThouwMedia, 2008)

> Does sanctioned street art encourage graffiti vandalism? The tools are often the same: spray paint and felt markers. The locations are public and highly visible. The skills seem the same. Does one lead to the other?[139]

However, such a question raises the problematic assumption of the flow of influence. Perhaps the question might be framed in reverse: Does unsanctioned graffiti encourage street art murals? Or perhaps it might be extended to enquire as to whether the public art produced by the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu or SCAPE might encourage unsanctioned graffiti, even if as a reflexive rebuttal to their presence, as evident in Slepa's response to the Gallery's Fomison reproduction. Furthermore does advertising invite such responses? The influence of the surrounding environment must be acknowledged as inspiring unsanctioned interventions, but this necessarily includes a wide range of aspects. Additionally, while *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* are largely viewed as positive contributions to the city's recovery, the presence of unsanctioned graffiti and street art might also be seen as raising important (if not always pleasant) issues around the rebuilding of a city and all its complications and inequalities.

Importantly, *The Press* article downplayed the idea that there was a connection between the presence of sanctioned festivals and unsanctioned graffiti and street art, noting a decline in reported graffiti vandalism incidents between figures from December 2012 and December 2013.[140] Later in the same article, Carolyn Gallagher, of the Christchurch City Council's anti-graffiti programme, described the difference between graffiti and street art as being that the latter "involves a relationship between the property owner and the artist… whereas tagging is damage to property, there's an invasion of property owners' rights. There's quite a strong demarcation."[141] This description, perhaps more illustrative of an outsider authority figure rather than an artist, illustrates the changing definitions of street art and graffiti, which have historically been understood as, in the words of Waclawek, "unsanctioned interventionist practices."[142]

However, a fine line between "good" and "bad" is a constant aspect of the expansion of urban art. It is the tension between a free, rebellious presence on the streets and the growing sanctioned and commercial identity of artists and their productions. The *Rise* and *From the Ground Up* murals assert certain elements of public ownership in their acts of beautification and transformation over specific critique and commentary. However, in their lineage and connection to graffiti and street art's sense

[139] Will Harvie, "Fine line between art and graffiti", *The Press*, p. A5
[140] Such statistics are problematic, dependent on qualification and reporting. Furthermore, in a setting such as Christchurch, where an array of buildings are likely not surveyed due to their damaged state or absentee owners.
[141] Harvie, "Fine line between art and graffiti", *The Press*, p. A5
[142] Waclawek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, p. 9

of rebellion, they are also inevitably engaged with the challenge to established expectations of public art and the perceptions of graffiti and street artists. Furthermore, they also suggest alternatives to the predominant visual make-up of cities in the form of municipal authority and commercial advertising and coercion (even if as this is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish). It is tempting to see one side as resistance and subversion and the other an affirmation of the control of space, yet such a simplistic view is limited and fails to illuminate all the issues at stake. However, the potential connection between these divergent approaches to making art was made apparent, despite the pervasive state of the city and the underlying motives and intentions of unsanctioned interventions being complex issues to consider in the evaluation of each. Unsanctioned graffiti and street art pre-dated the earthquakes as a feature of the city's environment, but post-quake the appearance of these rebellious forms has highlighted the potential to contest an urban space that has been physically deconstructed and slowly rebuilt, particularly in light of the seemingly positive contributions of sanctioned graffiti and street art murals.

Conclusion: We don't need a reason to break the rules

The rise of the contemporary muralist movement has perhaps been the defining trait of the evolution of graffiti and street art in the twenty first century, spreading across the globe in the form of supported projects and festivals. This has helped entrench these art forms and artists within popular culture, but also raises questions around transgressive and rebellious aspects of graffiti and street art as defining traits that have enabled an ideological contestation of the spaces we occupy. While many artists embrace both the opportunities inherent in working with permission and the traditions of working without permission, other artists remain adamant that their work loses power when sanctioned. Post-quake Christchurch has provided a microcosm where both sides of this international discussion have had prominent and important roles, all contributing to the reconstruction of the city as a complicated space. As a post-disaster setting, there have been numerous political discourses that have found public expression, including the presence of artistic interventions that have bypassed permission to avoid immediate censorship and to engage critical discussions. But unsanctioned graffiti and street art have also provided reminders of a more general sense of rebellion (alongside the need to immediately transform the broken physical surroundings, which for many usurped the need for permission), reminders of the ability to contest public space. In a setting where the physical structures and many social relationships have been exposed to reveal the inherent elements of control that are often obscured in our environments, such reminders, even in their eradication, have been an important part of the recovery process. But if these interventions have attempted to challenge certain authorities

and institutions, the presence of permissioned public art has helped recreate the city as more welcoming and attractive, and although often in a deeper, underlying manner, the re-establishment of control over the physical and social environment. While the emergence of graffiti and street art as sanctioned participants, most notably in the form of murals and wall paintings, has been a part of this process, the lineage of these artists within the rebellious roots of these cultures has complicated their place within public art discourses. The trace of transgression which has defined graffiti and street art's guerrilla nature remains, but it is clouded by the concessions of their sanctioned production.

When The Canterbury Museum, along with Oi YOU! presented *Rise*, the continued relationship between graffiti and street art as rebellious and subversive art forms was suggested throughout the exhibition (and even the wider museum), highlighting the way in which despite their evolution and expansion, such a connection remains a defining trait. However, it was perhaps outside the museum, on Christchurch's streets where *Rise*'s public mural component appeared (along with the almost concurrent *From the Ground Up*), that this dichotomy was made most apparent, with the city's abandoned buildings covered in graffiti and messages and comments regarding the politics of the rebuild visibly juxtaposed with the numerous sanctioned public art projects.

While graffiti and street art's popularity, particularly since the turn of the millennium, might reflect the desire for alternatives to both the preoccupations of the art world, and the evident elements of control in our day-to-day life, it might also have resulted in the growing sanctioned presence as a form of public art. As such, the question of how the divergent strands of these art movements might continue to exist is a pertinent one, not just in post-quake Christchurch's embrace of graffiti and street art, but in a wider global sense. As Christchurch is rebuilt and the damaged and vacant spaces become less numerous and visible, replaced by shiny new constructions laid over the quakes' legacy, how will these divergent approaches materialise?

Figures:

Figure 6.1: Otis Frizzell, *Yoshi* (with additional graffiti), 2011, Peterborough Street, central city (photo April 2012)

Figure 6.2: Rob Hood, *This Wall Can't Talk*, 2013, St Asaph Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.3: Various pieces of graffiti, St Asaph Street (opposite Rob Hood mural), central city (photo December 2013)

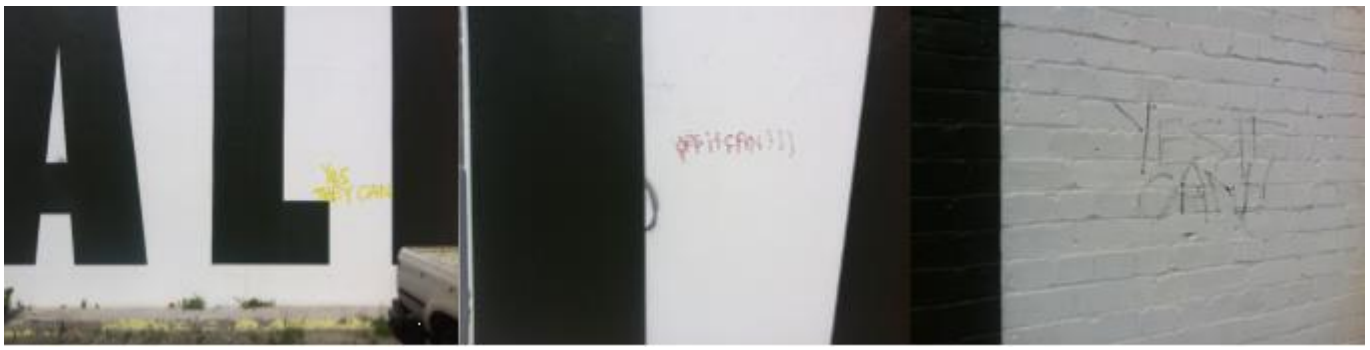

Figure 6.4: Various scrawled responses to Rob Hood mural (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.5: Private fence, Woodham Road, Avonside (photos 2013)

Figure 6.6: Private fence, Salisbury Street, central city (photos 2013)

Figure 6.7: Examples of ordinance signs, various central city locations

Figure 6.8: Various stickers and graffiti on ordinance signs, various central city locations (photos 2012-2015)

Figure 6.9: Unidentified artist, "Wake Up", Gloucester Street, central city (photo April 2014)

Figure 6.10: Unidentified artist, "Unauthorised Personnel Only", Durham Street South, central city (photo February 2013)

Figure 6.11: Seek, *Cardensity*, Manchester Street, central city, (photo May 2012)

Figure 6.12: Unidentified artist, "The earthquakes stopped us… but inept procedures are killing us", Cathedral Square, central city (photo October 2013)

Figure 6.13: Cubey, *Roga, Waza and Geza*, High Street, central city (photo July 2012)

Figure 6.14: Cubey, "KEEP CHCH GErry FREE", Colombo Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 6.15: Unidentified artist, "In Memoriam…", High Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 6.16: Unidentified artist, "DonKey Style", Lyttelton (photo February 2014)

Figure 6.17: HIM, "We Will Stay Strong CHCH", Moorhouse Avenue train tracks, central city/Sydenham (photo May 2012)

Figure 6.18: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's installation of Tony Fomison's *No!* (1969-1971), with graffiti by Slepa, High Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.19: Julia Morison, *Tree Houses for Swamp Dwellers*, 2013, Gloucester Street, central city, (photo January 2016)

Figure 6.20: Ash Keating, *Concrete Propositions*, Manchester Street, central city (photo February 2013)

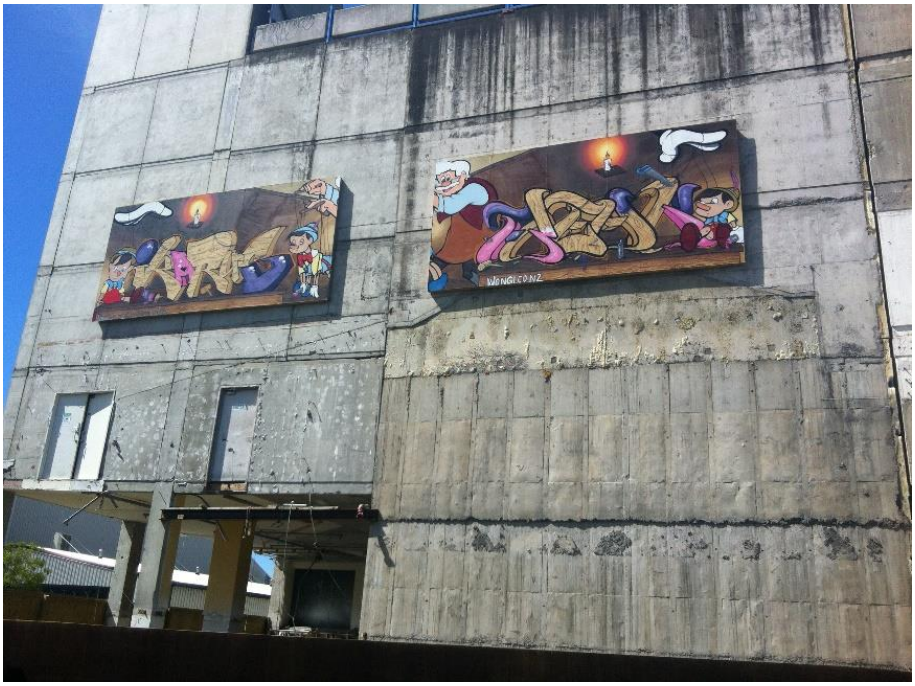

Figure 6.21: Wongi "Freak Wilson and Ikarus, *Pinnocchio Billboards*, 2012, Re:START Mall (photo December 2012)

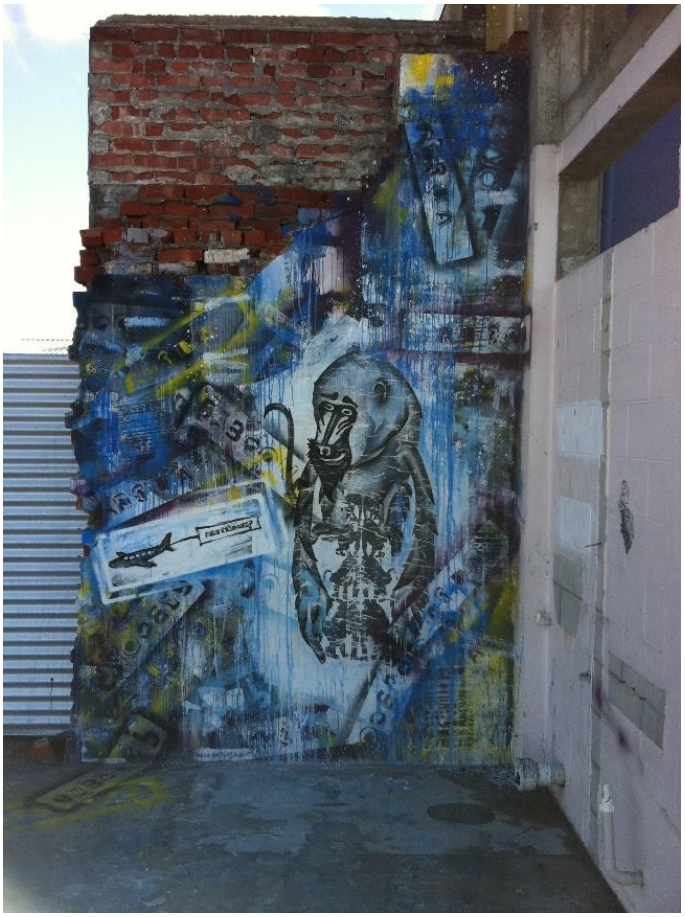

Figure 6.22: Tess Sheerin, *R U a Baboon?*, 2012, Manchester Street, central city (photo June 2012)

Figure 6.23: Tess Sheerin, *Hope Bear*, Rotheram Street, Riccarton, 2012 (photo credit: Tess Sheerin)

Figure 6.24: Tess Sheerin, *Giraffing Around*, Liverpool Street, 2013 (photo credit: Tess Sheerin)

Figure 6.25: Jacob Yikes, "Yikes 4 Mayor", Manchester Street, central city (photo September 2013)

Figure 6.26: Jacob Yikes, Manchester Street, central city (photo September 2013)

Figure 6.27: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus, Manchester Street, central city (photo September 2014)

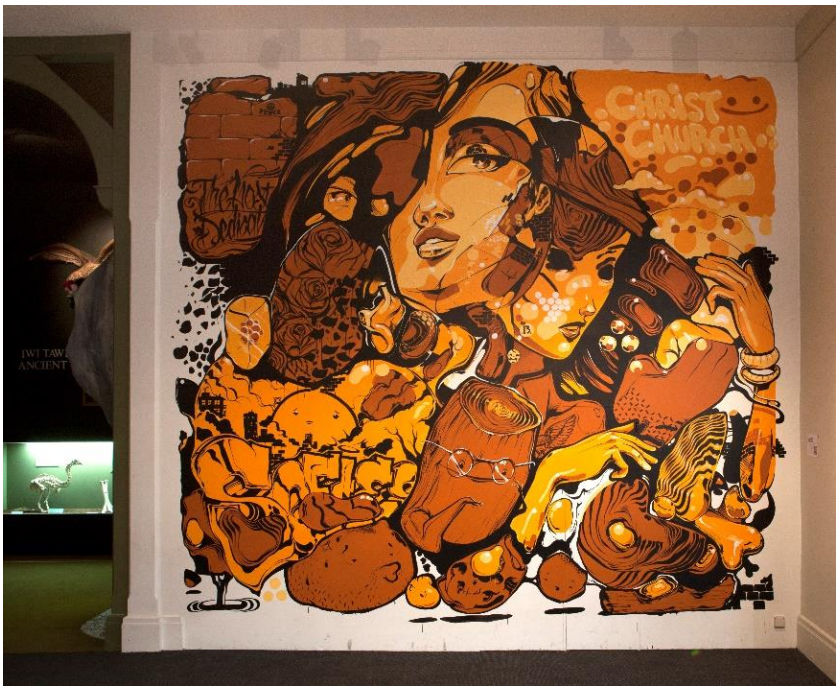

Figure 6.28: Sofles, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum 2014.I.166)

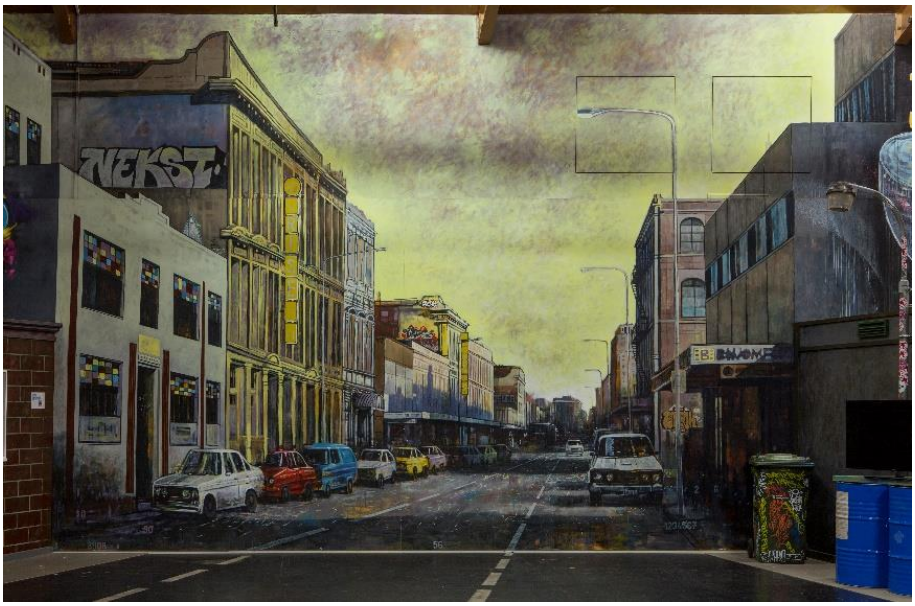

Figure 6.29: Thom Buchanan, street scene for *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.30: *Rise* exhibition main hall, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.31: *Rise* exhibition main hall, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.32: Askew One, *Leeya*, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum, 2014.I.161)

Figure 6.33: Eno, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum, 2014.I.173)

Figure 6.34: Milton Springsteen room, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.35: Fiordland crested penguin with wind up key, *Rise* exhibition intervention, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum 19XX.5.890)

Figure 6.36: Livia Marin, *Tea pot*, 2012, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum 2014.8.1)

Figure 6.37: Wongi "Freak" Wilson and Ikarus, 2013-2014, *Rise* exhibition, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.38: Various artists, Alleyway, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.39: Various artists, Alleyway, 2013, *Rise* exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo credit: Canterbury Museum)

Figure 6.40: Porta, Band-Aid Bandits and Bols, Alleyway (detail), *Rise* Exhibition, 2013-2014, Canterbury Museum (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.41: Cubey, *Brunolini (Civil Assault Continued)*, 2013, Canterbury Museum, (photo credit: Cubey)

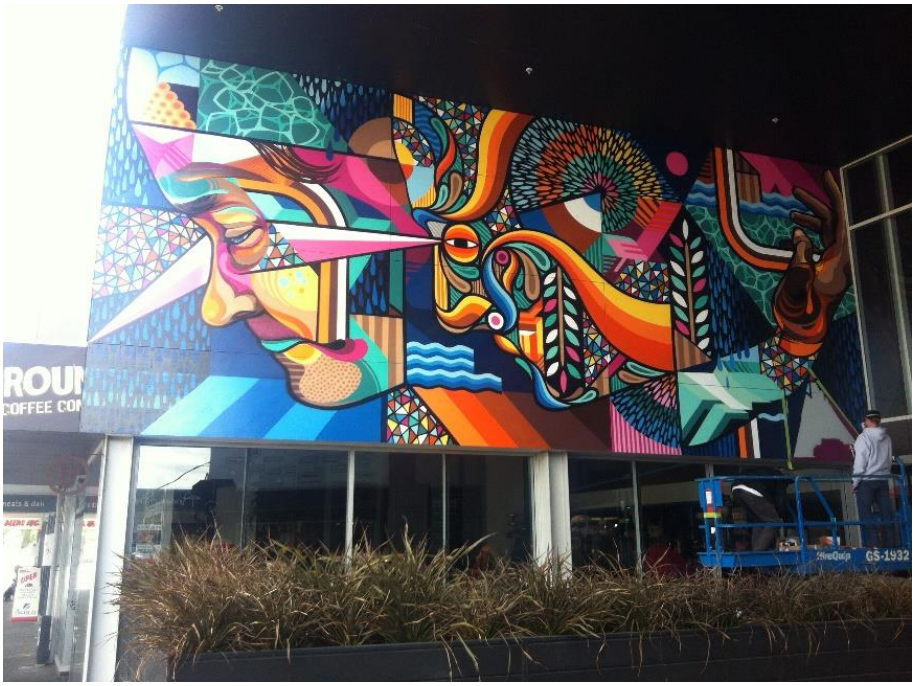

Figure 6.42: Beastman and Vans the Omega, 2013, Colombo Mall, Sydenham, 2013 (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.43: Eno, 2013, Colombo Mall, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.44: Daek, 2013, Underground Coffee building, Durham Street South, central city (photo December 2013)

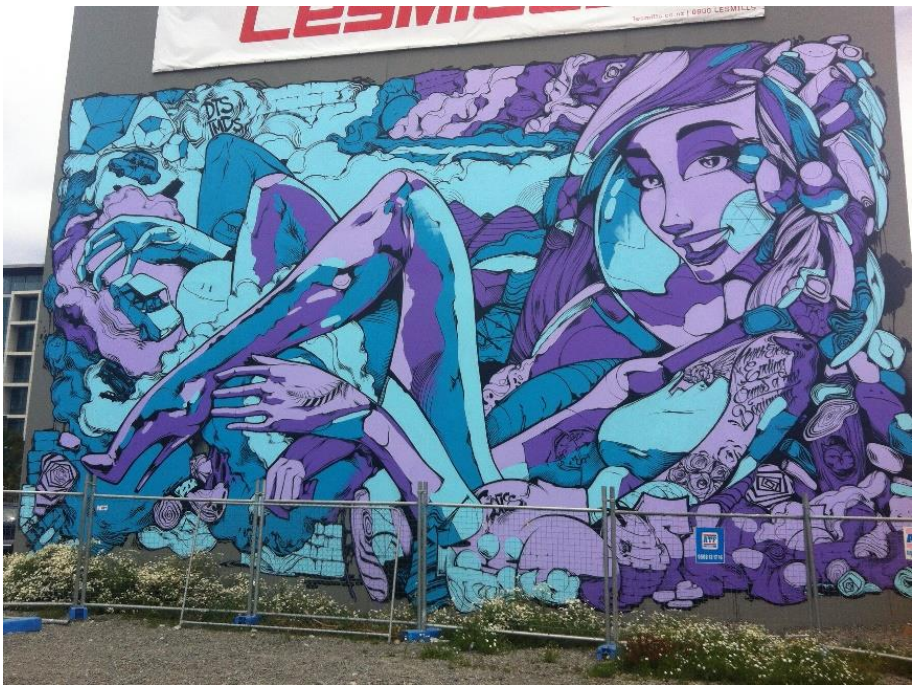

Figure 6.45: Sofles, 2013, Gloucester Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 6.46: Daek, 2013, Peterborough Street, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 6.47: Rone, 2013, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 6.48: ROA, 2013, Canterbury Museum, Rolleston Avenue, central city (photo January 2014)

Figure 6.49: Askew One, *Paris*, 2013, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

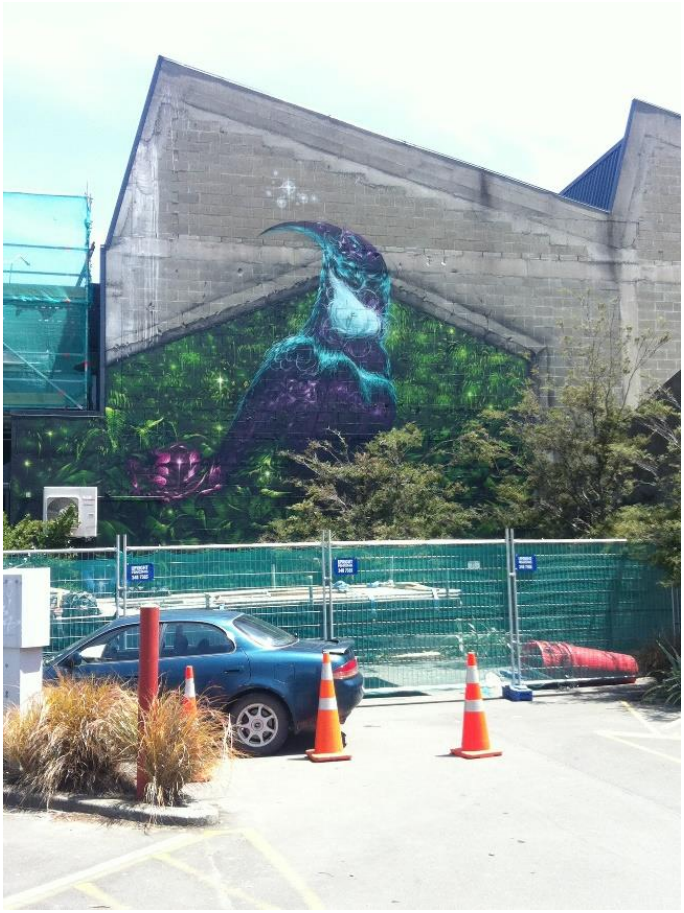

Figure 6.50: Elliott Francis Stewart, 2013, Madras Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.51: Jacob Yikes, 2013, Tuam Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 6.52: Fluro and Oche, *We Got the Sunshine*, 2013, Madras Street (photo February 2014)

Figure 6.53: BMD, *Leaping Foxes*, 2013, Lichfield Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.54: Drypnz, *Circle Fist Cuff*, 2013, Cashel Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.55: Gary Silipa, *Rebuilding Christchurch*, 2013, Cashel Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.56: BMD, *Blueprint for Christchurch*, 2013, City Mall, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.57: Johnny 4Higher (Pest5), "Forever in our memories", 2013, Manchester Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.58: Misery, 2013, Battersea Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.59: Berst, *God of the Forest*, 2013, Battersea Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.60: *Devos One (above), Sulk and Morepork (below), 2013, Battersea Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)*

Figure 6.61: Benjamin Work, 2013, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2014)

Figure 6.62: Mica Still, 2013, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2014)

Figure 6.63: Vans the Omega, 2013, Colombo Street, Sydenham (photo May 2014)

Figure 6.64: Various artists, 2013, Fitzgerald Avenue, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.65: Various artists, 2013, Fitzgerald Avenue, central city (photos December 2013)

Figure 6.66: Wongi "Freak Wilson and Ikarus, with various contributors, *Blackbook Wall*, 2013, Colombo Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.67: Lister, 2013, Manchester Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.68: Lister (attributed), 2013, Hereford Street, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure 6.69: Milton Springsteen, "Faster Pieces are Masterpieces", 2013, Worcester Boulevard, central city (photo January 2014)

Conclusion

"Our aim is to cement Christchurch as a true centre for street art."[1]

- **George Shaw, Oi YOU!, 2012**

"It's a real disgrace. The graffiti is out of control."[2]

- **Christchurch City Councillor Paul Lonsdale, November 2015**

Post-quake Christchurch has provided a fitting setting for graffiti and street art to emerge as a prominent part of the city's creative landscape. This research has necessarily considered a diverse range of art in public space, from the presence of cultural institutions such as the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, to what I have described using Schacter and Abarca's term, as "Independent Public Art", to illuminate the way graffiti and street art have operated in multifarious ways within the complicated post-disaster setting. As globally ubiquitous and popular forms that engage with the spaces we inhabit, it is unsurprising that graffiti and street art were a prominent contribution to this environment. While graffiti and street art's inherent and enduring relationships to our physical and social surroundings, both in the reaction of artists to these spaces and in our own reception of their work, ensured they were fitting tools in the post-disaster city, their emergence is also tied to a reconsideration of the use of public space in the wake of the quakes as a site of necessary transformation and communication (in some cases even rupturing the distinction between public and private). The earthquakes' destructive impact rendered many spaces abandoned and as such prime locations for creative interventions, from community-minded initiatives, to more opportunistic additions. While this shifting attitude to public space may have enabled graffiti and street art's rising profile and acceptance (to varying degrees) as an interesting part of the cityscape, the physical post-quake environment has afforded numerous possibilities for artists, and as such the potential for an

[1] Zammit, "Oi YOU! Street Art", *No Cure*, p. 106
[2] Lois Cairns, "Tagged: Graffiti makes eyesore of city", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, November 28-29, 2015, p. A2

array of interpretations of their work. Examples have ranged from sanctioned work to guerrilla interventions, from explicit earthquake references to the ongoing "name fixation" of graffiti writing, from huge murals packed with elaborate details, to the scrawled messages found on the walls of vacated houses. This variety is reflected in the broad spectrum not only of this research and the responses to the post-earthquake setting, but also graffiti and street art's increasingly reconfigured boundaries.

While Christchurch had a defined, if relatively young and small, graffiti culture (as represented in the *Rise* "alleyway"), the post-quake city has developed a more visible and nuanced relationship with graffiti and street art as more broadly conceived cultures. The city's post-quake environment has reinforced, expanded and complicated the understanding of graffiti and street art. The combination of these globally ubiquitous forms and the unique qualities and intricacies of the post-disaster setting have illuminated transposable and adaptable formal, material and thematic approaches that enable consideration of the ways we engage with our surrounding environment. Graffiti and street art's traditional tropes and tactics have been fitting additions to this unique setting, but in this post-disaster context, these approaches have also been imbued with new and altered meanings and layers. Graffiti and street art have performed a number of roles; transforming, concealing and illuminating the visible impact of the quakes, suggestions of repopulation, exploration and acts of remembrance amongst a changing landscape, engaging with critical public discourses, and even contributing to the "official" recovery of the city, and reinstating a sense of control over the environment. In particular, the contrast between the more resistant and disruptive examples of unsanctioned interventions and the popular presence of permissioned mural work, evidenced by the likes of *Rise* and *From the Ground Up*, has highlighted the way graffiti and street art have illuminated how the complex process of rebuilding a city is loaded with ideological meaning as well as physical toil. Indeed, while outside the scope of this work, fruitful avenues of research around this topic might include issues of gender and multi-culturalism in graffiti and street art, especially within the notions of anonymity and the increasing exposure as part of the Christchurch's creative and cultural identity.

The post-quake presence of graffiti and street art has often been entwined with the numerous empty, abandoned and damaged sites across the city, remnants of the earthquake that will either be cleared away and replaced or repaired and returned to use. As such, questions will be raised around the presence and reception of graffiti and street art in Christchurch as the recovery is completed (although a state of flux will always remain an aspect of any city), providing future areas of investigation. Will the presence of graffiti and street artists continue to be part of the new urban identity, or will it once again be pushed to the peripheries? And if they do remain a central component of the visual landscape, what forms will they take? While the post-quake setting remains a key formative and

contextual element for their continued development, graffiti and street art's ability to remain relevant amidst the changing city has already become apparent.

Since the staging of *Rise*, a range of projects outside the scope of this work have exemplified the continued presence of graffiti and street art as more visible and evolving aspects of the city's creative landscape: the *Style Walls* graffiti competition that has been staged for consecutive years since 2013; various exhibitions held by artists, both individually and collectively, such as Ikarus and Jacob Yikes' *Under the Influence* in 2014, Wongi "Freak" Wilson's *The Graffiti Freak Show* (2013) and *CAP'D*, a collective show of disparate works by an array of artists established by artist Porta in New Brighton starting in 2014; and the continued production of murals and wall paintings by local and visiting artists adding to the array of works adorning city walls in both prominent and more marginal spaces **(Figs. 7.1-7.4)**. The sustained interest has also seen various informal and organised walking tours of the city's street art (including many I have led both on a casual basis and notably for SCAPE Public Art), cross-over inclusion within pan-arts events such as the *First Thursdays* events in Sydenham, and artists commissioned to paint businesses (which inevitably raises questions around the relationship between art and commerce, but also increases the visibility of these artists) **(Fig. 7.5)**. Furthermore, there has been continued media coverage of new additions and events, which is sometimes celebratory, and at other times critical (often dependent on the mode of production of the works under discussion).

Oi YOU!'s continued presence, with a new setting inside the YMCA building on Hereford Street (with the intention of establishing a permanent "street art museum"), has provided the most visible and celebrated example. *Spectrum*, staged in both 2015 and 2016, and including both public murals and exhibitions inside the YMCA building **(Figs. 7.6, 7.7)**, has brought more high-profile artists to the city, including Buff Monster (USA), Tilt (France), Adnate (Australia), Seth (France) and Jorge Rodriguez Gerada (Cuba/USA), while also affording local artists such as Freak, Ikarus and Jacob Yikes further exposure alongside these prominent visitors, signifying the potential for local artists to develop a wider profile outside of Christchurch (yet another area of research that would potentially highlight the long term impact of the period investigated here).[3] Despite the Museum and Oi YOU!'s assertion that *Rise* was not an earthquake exhibition, the *Spectrum* shows have become further distanced from the Christchurch earthquakes (although it remains undeniable that the still recovering landscape presents a setting of opportunity and attraction to urban artists that might be harder to find in other cities), and to some degree, from the streets, presenting graffiti and street art as an evolving art movement

[3] Charlie Gates, "Art returns to Chch streets", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 5, 2015, p. A16; Charlie Gates, "From wildlife to street life", *The Press*, Wednesday, December 30, 2015, p. A3. It is interesting to note that Mike Hewson was awarded "Best Visual Artist" at the 2013 FBi Sydney Music, Art & Culture Awards (Vicki Anderson, "Award Winner", *The Press* (*Go Arts* section), Friday, January 24, 2014, p. 13)

with artists given the chance to illustrate their diverse practices in various settings. While discussion of the *Spectrum* shows is outside the timeframe of this work, these exhibitions would be worthy subjects for future research exploring the inherently fraught role of museums in presenting graffiti and street art.[4]

While this work has investigated the relationship between graffiti and street art and the post-quake landscape, over time the impact of the earthquakes - while still visible - has become a less overbearing influence. While Oi YOU! have been vital contributors to the city's array of street art murals and indeed to the graffiti and street art communities themselves, they have also engaged with the difficulties in the perceptions of these art forms and their increasing sanctioned position. The perceived reliance on international "out-of-town" artists, and the stated intention that the street art museum will help to combat graffiti vandalism (perhaps lip service to both the YMCA and other funders), suggest this complicated terrain. Indeed, this is indicative of the wider issue facing the city and its relationship with graffiti and street art. Ultimately, graffiti and street art will survive on the streets, where the following generations of artists who might transition into exhibitions and festivals will emerge (and where those who refute such events will continue to operate). Therefore, Christchurch's embrace of graffiti and street art in the form of sanctioned murals and events such as *Rise* and *Spectrum*, must be balanced against the continued development of a grassroots, underground culture, where the transgressive, challenging and anti-authoritarian elements of these art forms will be retained. It is beneficial to recall the discussion of the flow of influence in the preceding chapter. Will the underground cultures continue to be reflected in the mainstream, sanctioned presence? Or will this incarnation instigate further evolution of the art made in the streets? Will smaller interventions that exist without permission no longer be afforded the same sense of romanticism? Will larger sanctioned projects become the established preference, or with the recognition of the central city as a contested site of numerous discourses and conversations, continue to attract unsanctioned voices?

By late 2015, media headlines varied from celebrations of the street art murals across the city, to the vilification of graffiti writers treating empty buildings as canvasses. The complexities of the urban art movement and its role in the city's recovery remain dichotomous and divisive. If the post-quake setting has perhaps illustrated an expedited microcosm of graffiti and street art's international evolution from unsanctioned to increasingly mainstream, in November 2015, a media article suggested the city was at a cross road in its relationship to these forms. Councillor Paul Lonsdale, who

[4] Warren Feeney, "Street art belongs in the street", March 18, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/67433178/Street-art-belongs-in-the-street, accessed March 20, 2015; Charlie gates, "Spectrum kicks off hot summer of art", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 12, 2015, p. A7

had supported several sanctioned graffiti and street art projects and events (including *Spectrum*), decried the graffiti that had covered many of the still empty buildings in the central city, suggesting that it was a disgrace and a poor reflection of the city **(Figs. 7.8, 7.9)**.[5]

While that opinion was likely held by many, the unused buildings, serving no other purpose, could also be considered eyesores without the graffiti, which has added a swell of colour to city, but also a sense of the city's imperfect make up. As Askew One argued in the 2008 graffiti documentary *Alter Ego*, "cities should not be perfect and clean, it doesn't reflect the people who live in them."[6] Furthermore, the opposition to art made without permission is a vital component of its meaning, imbuing it with its challenging nature and ability to provide alternatives to other elements of our visual cultures and physical landscapes. Christchurch, a city rebuilding and a setting where the relationship to public space has been reconsidered, will provide an interesting site for these questions to be addressed over the following years. The "rebuilt" city will continue to provide a site where guerrilla artists can contest the structures - both physical and ideological - of the surrounding environment. The spectre of the earthquakes may eventually be cleared away, but the willingness to engage with our environment and to question how this space is managed will persist. Graffiti and street art's arguably inexorable tendency to fill vacuums was perhaps best expressed by a declarative piece of graffiti that recently appeared on a temporary fence in the inner city: "You're provoking me!" **(Fig. 7.10)**.

[5] Cairns, "Tagged: Graffiti makes eyesore of city", *The Weekend Press*, p. A2

[6] *Alter Ego: A Worldwide Documentary about Graffiti Writing*, dir. Daniel Thouw, ThouwMedia, 2008

Figures:

Figure 7.1: *Style Walls* final, Re:START Mall, February 2014

Figure 7.2: Hitnes, 2014, St Asaph Street, central city (photo April 2014)

Figure 7.3: Mark Catley, 2015, Colombo Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 7.4: Jacob Yikes, 2015/2016, Manchester Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 7.5: Jacob Yikes, exterior of Mexico restaurant, 2015, Manchester Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 7.6: Adnate, 2014 central city (photo April 2015)

Figure 7.7: Tilt, 2014, Victoria Street, central city (photo February 2016)

Figure 7.8: ENOK and AVIR, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 7.9: Various artists, Cathedral Square, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure 7.10: Unidentified artist, "You're provoking me!", Oxford Terrace, central city (photo January 2016)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Additional Images

This appendix contains images referenced with footnotes but not discussed directly in the main text.

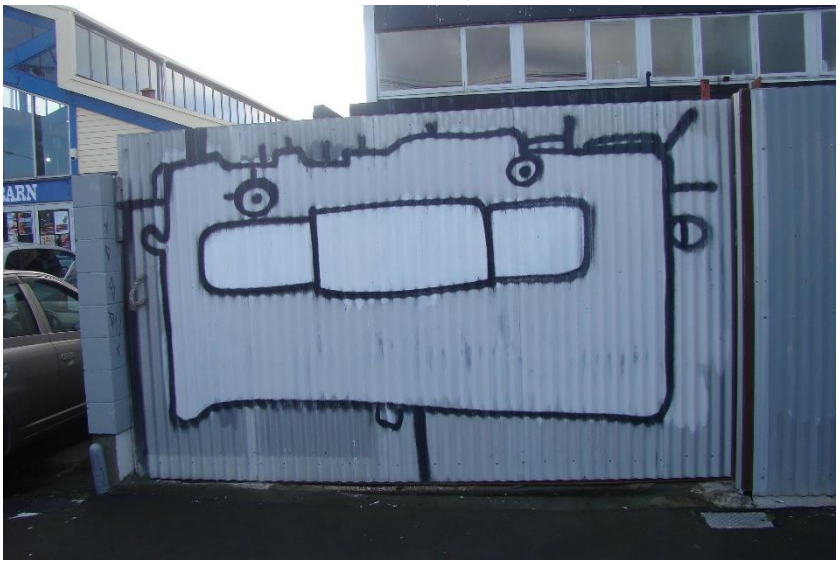

Figure A1: Unidentified artist, New Brighton (photo August 2012)

Figure A2: Red zone house with graffiti and "buff" paint, Burwood (photo January 2016)

Figure A3: Wongi "Freak" Wilson and Ikarus, "Desire Talent Respect", Re:START Mall, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure A4: Mark Catley, 2012, New Brighton (photo June 2013)

Figure A5: Resto, 2013, Battersea Street, Sydenham (photo December 2013)

Figure A6: Trent Hiles, *The Fifth Ship*, 2013, Lyttelton (November 2013)

Figure A7: Jen McBride, *Knit Happens*, 2012, Madras Street, central city (photo September 2012)

Figure A8: Unidentified artist, "GE FREE NZ", Lyttelton (photo September 2012)

Figure A9: Richard "Popx" Baker and various contributors, 2013/2014, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure A10: Inside/Out project, "Central New Brighton School", 2012, New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo January 2013)

Figure A11: HIM, "Skycity: The Future of Problem Gambling…", 2012, North New Brighton (photo April 2012)

Figure A12: Kay Rosen, *Here are the people and there is the steeple*, 2012, Worcester Boulevard, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure A13: Owen Dippie, 2014, Manchester Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Figure A14: Owen Dippie's *Ballerina* obscured by new construction (photo January 2016)

Figure A15: Jarad Bryant, ALC advertisements, Cranmer Square, central city (photo: August 2013)

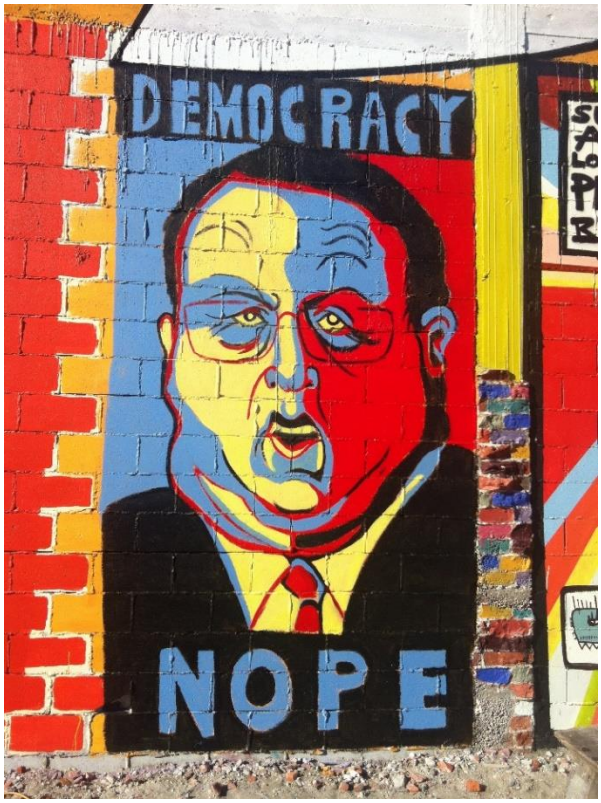

Figure A16: Bex Gibbs and Richard "Popx" Baker, "Democracy Nope", New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure A17: Bex Gibbs, "A Very Hungry Cater-Parata", New Brighton Creative Quarter, New Brighton (photo January 2016)

Figure A18: Various graffiti pieces over the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's reproduction of Fomison's *No!* (photo January 2016)

Figure A19: Ash Keating, *Concrete Propositions* (repainted), 2016, Manchester Street, central city (photo February 2016)

Figure A20: ROA, 2013, bird aviary ceiling, Canterbury Museum, Rolleston Avenue, central city (photo December 2013)

Figure A21: Order, 2013, Hereford Street, central city (photo April 2014)

Figure A22: Wongi "Freak" Wilson, Ikarus and various artists, *Blackbook Wall* (repainted), Hereford Street, central city (photo January 2016)

Appendix 2: Timeline

This timeline of events is not exhaustive. It forms a brief chronological structure, to provide context for this work. It spans a significant period of time and various social, political, geological and wider artistic events and developments.

4 September 2010 – Magnitude 7.1 earthquake hits Christchurch at 4.35am

14 September 2010 – The Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act 2010 is passed

24 September – 7 November 2010 – SCAPE 6 Biennial of Art in Public Space scheduled to occur, but is delayed due to earthquakes. Eventually many of the planned projects are realised as disparate programmes both in Christchurch and in Auckland throughout 2011 and 2013, many in altered forms or in new locations

2 October 2010 – 23 January 2011 – Ron Mueck's *Sculpture* show at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu attracts over 100,000 visitors[1]

25 November 2010 – The first Gap Filler project is staged on Colombo Street

26 December 2010 – Magnitude 4.9 earthquake hits Christchurch at 10:30am

22 February 2011 – Magnitude 6.3 earthquake hits Christchurch at 12:51pm. The central city red zone cordon is established

23 February 2011 – A National State of Emergency is declared

18 March 2011 – A national earthquake memorial service is held in Hagley Park

29 March 2011 – The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) is created

18 April 2011 – The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 is passed

3 May 2011 – Major demolition of damaged buildings begins

10 May 2011 – The National State of Emergency ends

14 May 2011 – The six-week 'Share an Idea' consultation begins

[1] Uncredited, "Mueck exhibition breaks records", 18 January 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/4550482/Mueck-exhibition-breaks-records, accessed 4 March 2016

13 June 2011 – Magnitude 5.9 earthquake hits Christchurch at 1:00pm, a second quake, of magnitude 6.4 hits at 2:20pm

23 June 2011 – Land Zone announcements designate the city into red, green, orange and white categories; red denotes land as unsuitable for re-build

August 2011 – SCAPE 6 is jointly held in a condensed form in both Christchurch and Auckland

11 August 2011 – The Christchurch City Council's Draft Central City Plan is released for consultation

12 August – 2 October 2011 – 2011 Christchurch Arts Festival is staged

October 2011 – Sumner's Container Art Gallery is started, with works added over the following months and years

October –December 2011 – A Christchurch manifestation of the international Occupy movement is established in Hagley Park South

29 October 2011 – Re:START Mall, with retail spaces constructed from shipping containers on the site of City Mall opens to the public

December 2011 – Wayne Youle's mural *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* is painted in Sydenham

21 December 2011 – EQC announces completion of its residential assessment programme in Canterbury

23 December 2011 – Magnitude 6.2 earthquake hits Christchurch at 3:18pm

December 2011 –June 2012 – Ongoing demolition of Crowne Plaza building

1 February 2012 – Several thousand people publically protest against the Christchurch City Council

9 February 2012 – A report into the collapse of the CTV building is released

22 February 2012 – A one year anniversary memorial service is held in Hagley Park, with smaller services also held across the city

22 February 2012 – Peter Majendie's *185 Empty Chairs* memorial is unveiled on the lawn of the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church

22 February 2012 – The first incarnation of the Flowers in Road Cone project occurs to mark the first anniversary of the February quake

15 February 2012 – Gap Filler's *Dance-O-Mat* is unveiled on Manchester Street

18 April 2012 – The CCDU (Christchurch Central Development Unit) is established

18 April 2012 – Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee announces the 100-day blueprint design process

April – October 2012 – Mike Hewson's *Homage to Lost Spaces* takes shape across the boarded windows of the Cranmer Normal School building

30 June 2012 – Michael Parekowhai's *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* is displayed in the city, both inside the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu's temporary NG building exhibition space, and outside on a vacant space on Madras Street, visible from the exhibition space. The work's popularity results in a public drive for the city to purchase the work

30 July 2012 – The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan is launched by Prime Minister John Key

31 July 2012 – The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan comes into law

20-28 October 2012 – The inaugural FESTA (Festival of Transitional Architecture) entitled *LUXCITY* takes place across vacant central city site along Gloucester, Manchester and Colombo Streets

4-5 November 2012 – New Brighton hosts *Mural Madness*, an event which is on-going over several months

November 2012 – Gap Filler's *Pallet Pavilion* opens on the former site of the Crowne Plaza

November 2012 – January 2013 – The inaugural Art Beat event is staged in the central city featuring a pan-arts schedule

March 2013 – A repaired New Regent Street re-opens with restaurants, cafes, bars and retail spaces

30 June 2013 – After 859 days, the central city red zone cordon is removed

August 2013 – Cathedral Square partially re-opened to public

August 2013 – After delays, the Christchurch Transitional Cathedral (dubbed the 'Cardboard Cathedral') is opened to public

27 September – 9 November 2013 – SCAPE 7 Public Art Biennial is held across the city, including both temporary projects and the unveiling of two permanent legacy works: Julia Morison's *Tree Houses for Swamp Dwellers* and Mischa Kuball's *Solidarity Grid*

October 2013 – The Second FESTA, *Canterbury Tales,* is staged, featuring a moving puppet show along Oxford Terrace

November 2013 – The main tram city loop returns to operation

November 2013 – January 2014 – The second Art Beat event is staged across the central city

December 2013 – *From the Ground Up* produces a range of murals around Sydenham and the central city

December 2013 – *Rise* opens at the Canterbury Museum and a collection of Big Wall murals are painted around the central city

October 2014 – The third FESTA event, *City Ups*, is staged at the intersection of Tuam, High and Manchester Streets

November 2014 – The inaugural *First Thursdays* event held in Sydenham is staged as an evolution of the Art Beat programme

February 2015 – *Spectrum* opens at the YMCA (and T-Shirts Unfolding at the Canterbury Museum) as the follow up to *Rise* presented by Oi YOU! A significant grant from Todd Foundation to set up of a permanent street art museum at the YMCA site is announced

February 2015 – Six designs are shortlisted for an official memorial to the February 2011 earthquake

November 2015 – The second *Spectrum* exhibition and festival opens at the YMCA, with an array of new murals also produced by the local, national and international roster

December 2015 – The Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu re-opens to the public after its long closure

14 February 2016 – Magnitude 5.7 earthquake hits Christchurch at 1:13pm. Although there are no fatalities, it provides a stark reminder of the realities of life in Christchurch

Appendix 3: Glossary

Graffiti and Street Art Terms:

It should be noted that graffiti and street artists will often utilise localised or evolving vernaculars, and as such terms can often be quite fluid in meaning and use.

Bando: *A colloquial term for an empty and abandoned building popular with guerrilla artists*

Bite/Biting: *Copying another artist's work or style directly*

Black Book: *A sketch book used by graffiti writers often to collect tags and designs by other writers/artists*

Bomb/Bombing: *The act of writing graffiti prolifically in an area*

Bubble Letter: *A lettering style that is curved and gives the effect of letters being inflated*

Buff/Buffing: *To remove painted graffiti by painting over it with a flat block of paint or by the use of chemicals*

Burner: *A piece that outdoes other works through its high quality (also used as a verb "to burn" another writer)*

Cap: *An aerosol nozzle. A variety of caps are used by artists to create different lines, fills and effects (to "cap" is to cross out or deface another writer's work as a sign of disrespect)*

Character: *A cartoon figure either taken from a popular culture source or developed by an artist, in some cases a character might replace letter- or word-based graffiti for an artist and be used in a repetitive manner*

Crew: *An organisation or collective of artists and writers, often signified by three letter names that can stand for various phrases and descriptions*

Crossing Out/Going Over: *To paint over the top of another piece of graffiti, often a sign of disrespect*

Culture Jamming/Subvertising: *Term used to describe interventions upon existing commercial advertising, especially large billboards (but also signage, bus shelters etc.). Tactics will subvert the meaning of advertising as a critique of the product or consumerism more generally.*

Gesso Release: *Although not strictly a street art technique, a method of transferring a laser copied image to a surface using a layer of gesso on both the support and the reverse of the paper before peeling away the paper. Can be used on exterior surfaces*

Getting Up: *Writing graffiti, and specifically one's name*

Graffiti: *Historical term that was applied to "writing" in the 60s/70s. Originally a pluralisation of the singular "graffito" which refers to any mark scratched into a surface. Since accepted as a singular term and although still used to denote any form of illegal marking, is widely used by graffiti writers/artists as well as authority*

Handstyle: *The style employed by graffiti writers in producing a tag or simple letter forms rather than multi-coloured, filled-in and three-dimensional productions*

Independent Public Art: *A term used by Rafael Schacter, developed from Javier Abarca, to describe uncommissioned, unofficial art that takes place in the public realm, outside the gallery or museum*

Intervention: *The addition of some type of object/image into an environment that specifically refers to, engages with, or alters the environment*

King: *Achieving the status and recognition of being the most accomplished graffiti writer in any category or location*

Letterform: *A letter's shape, derived from typographic and calligraphic terminology*

Meta-Graffiti: *Graffiti about graffiti, as such a conceptual form*

Mural: *A large scale production mostly produced with permission, but not a term favoured by many graffiti artists*

Parkour: *Urban free running*

Paste-Up: *A technique of applying a paper poster to a wall using a glue or adhesive*

Pichação/Pixação: *A particular style of graffiti endemic to Brazil, produced traditionally in black paint and with the use of a paint roller to produce and angular and almost gothic style*

Piece: *Short for masterpiece, originally a large production that featured usually a name, background and character produced in high style, more recently has been used simply to refer to a writer's name in a more developed form, especially amongst a larger production*

Post-Graffiti: *A term originally used for an early graffiti art exhibition in New York, now used to discuss the evolution of street art as a form both influenced by graffiti and at the same time moving away from the traditions of graffiti writing*

Production: *A group effort, a collaborative work that would usually feature names, a background and characters – similar to the use of the term "piece" historically*

Scribing: *Scratching a tag into a surface using a sharp object, making it harder to remove*

Slaps: *Term for stickers, in reference to the act of applying them to a surface*

Steez: *abbreviation of "style with ease", use to describe one's unique style*

Stencil: *An old image making technique that works by cutting an image into a plate (which can range from card to plastic and even metal) then spray painting against a wall. The cut-out sections leave the paint image on the surface – popularised by the likes of Blek le Rat and Banksy*

Stickers: *A quicker way of "getting up" by using adhesive stickers which can range from simple handstyles on re-purposed stickers, or handmade designs, to commercially printed vinyl or paper stickers*

Straights: *A lettering style that emphasises the upright and straight letters, referencing "cholo" (Latino gang graffiti from Los Angeles) graffiti writing, also popular in New Zealand where a distinct style evolved*

Street Craft/Craftivism/Free-Knitting/Yarn Bombing: *Various terms for the adornment of urban elements with knitted wool or yarn, creating a transformative intervention that contrasts with the urban environment*

Tag: *A simplified version of a writer's name, often used to quickly "get up"*

Throw-Up: *A slightly more detailed version of a writer's tag, although still simplified and designed to be executed quickly, will often be reduced to two letters rather than a full name. Usually consists of an outline and a fill. Often referred to as a "throwie"*

Toy: *A young, inexperienced writer, or a writer without skill or style*

Urban Art: *Another term used to cover both graffiti and street art, its blanket nature allows consideration of various forms despite overt differences*

Urban Contemporary: *A contemporary art movement which covers the gallery work of graffiti and street artists*

Wall: *Favoured description of large-scale wall paintings, productions or murals*

Wheat Paste: *A home-made adhesive/glue used to apply a poster to a wall, it can be brushed over the surface, often with a large brush and left to dry, some artists prefer to use store bought glue or PVA depending on the size of their work and the type of surface*

Writing: *The preferred term for the act of graffiti by many practitioners. Graffiti was a term applied by authority to highlight the culture's illegal/vandalistic nature and was originally not used by "writers", although it was eventually co-opted and embraced*

Christchurch Earthquakes:

The terms and entities included here are largely official, rather than colloquialisms that entered Christchurch vernacular throughout the earthquake period.

Anchor Projects: *Large government-mandated projects developed as central elements of the central city spatial Blueprint*

Art Box: *Architectural structures designed as portable studio and exhibition spaces, a project supported by the CPIT*

Blueprint/100 Day Plan: *The Government and CCDU spatial plan for the central city recovery, detailing the placement of precincts and anchor projects (see also CCRP – Christchurch Central Recovery Plan and CCP – Draft Central City Plan)*

CCDU (Central City Development Unit): *A unit within CERA charged with the planning and rebuild of Christchurch's central city based on the 100-day Blueprint*

CCP (Draft Central City Plan): *Christchurch City Council's initial recovery plan based on the Share an Idea consultation campaign which invited public participation*

CCRP (Christchurch Central Recovery Plan): *Government's recovery plan for the central city, developed from the CCP*

CDB: *Central business district, alternative term for the central city*

Central City Red Zone: *Cordoned off area of the central city patrolled by military/defence force*

CER Act 2011 (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act): *Legislation passed by Parliament to enable a coordinated response to the destruction in Christchurch*

CERA (Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Authority): *the Government organisation overseeing* the *rebuild*

EQC (Earthquake Commission): *The government body responsible for residential insurance pay-outs*

Gap Filler: *A post-quake organisation that aimed to activate the vacant spaces around the city with an array of creative projects, from cinema projections to interactive games and sculptural objects, Gap Filler gained a much local, national and international exposure*

Heritage/Historic Buildings: *Buildings deemed of sufficient architectural status to be protected from demolition (The Historic Places Act of 1993 was legislation to preserve places of historic interest in New Zealand)*

Hurricane Fencing/Chain Link Fencing: *The chain link fencing primarily used to construct and define the red zone cordon and prominently used to closed off out-of-bounds areas around the city*

Land Zones: *Various colour codes given to areas of the city in regards to the impact on the quakes in relation to the ability to rebuild based on the suitability of the terrain. Red: too damaged for timely and cost-efficient rebuild; Orange: required further assessment; Green: building can occur; White: yet to be categorised*

Liquefaction: *The process that causes silt to be pushed upwards following a severe quake. Often misused to describe the sediment that covered many areas of the city following major quakes*

Residential Red Zone: *The largely water-bound areas that run from the central city to the east where re-building was deemed too high risk. Many stretches have now been returned to nature, while others retain signs of disparate presence*

Transitional City: *The post-quake city during the recovery period, a city in-between the earthquake events and the rebuilt city in the future*

USAR/USAR Markings: *The spray painted markings used by search and rescue crews to denote the outcome of searches through damaged buildings in the wake of the February quake*

Bibliography:

Books:

Acker, Christian P., *Flip the Script – A Guidebook for Aspiring Vandals & Typographers*, Berkeley, Gingko Press in association with Upper Playground, 2013

Ansley, Bruce, *Christchurch Heritage: A Celebration of Lost Buildings & Streetscapes*, Auckland, Random House, 2011

Austin, Joe, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001

Babington, Jaklyn, ed., *Space Invaders – Australian Street/Stencils/Posters/Paste-Ups/Zines/Stickers*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 2010

Bansky, *Wall and Piece*, London, Century, 2005

Bell Yank, Sue, *Biennial Rising: Prospect.1 New Orleans and the Post-Disaster Arts Movement, A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the USC, Roski School of Fine Arts, University of Southern California, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Public Art Studies*. Ann Arbor, MI, UMI Microform, 2009

Bennett, Barnaby, Eugenio Boidi, and Irene Boles, eds., *Christchurch: The Transitional City Pt IV*, Christchurch, Free Range Press, 2012

Bennett, Barnaby, James Dann, Emma Johnson and Ryan Reynolds, eds., *Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch*, Christchurch, Free Range Press, 2014

Booker, Paula, and Marnie Slater, eds., *Public Good, Itinerant Responses to Collective Space*, Wellington, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, 2008

Borden, Iain, *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body*, Oxford, Berg, 2001

Brinkley, Douglas, *The Great Deluge – Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast*, New York, William Morrow, 2006

Bullock, Craig, *Quake Cats: Heart-warming stories of Christchurch cats*, Auckland, Random House, 2014

Castleman, Craig, *Getting Up –Subway Graffiti in New York*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England, The MIT Press, 1982

Çelik, Zeynep, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll, eds., *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1994

Chalfant, Henry, and Martha Cooper, *Subway Art*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 1984

Chalfant, Henry, and James Prigoff, *Spraycan Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1987

Chalfant, Henry, and Sacha Jenkins, *Training Days: The Subway Artists Then and Now*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2014

Chilvers, Ian, *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998

Clark, S.D., *The Suburban Society*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966

Conland, Natasha, and Susanne Jaschko, eds., *Don't Misbehave! : SCAPE 2006 Biennial of Art in Public Space*, Christchurch, Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2006

Cookson, John, and Graeme Dunstall, eds., *Southern Capital: Christchurch: Towards a City Biography, 1850-2000*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2000

Cropp, Amanda, *Shaken, Not Stirred – Family Survival in a Quake Zone*, Christchurch, Wily Publishing Ltd, 2011

Danto, Arthur C., *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1992

Davis, Mike, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 1998

de Certeau, Michel (translated by Steven Rendall), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1984

Deitch, Jeffrey, with Roger Gastman and Aaron Rose, *Art in the Streets*, New York/Los Angeles, Skira Rizzoli/MOCA, 2011

Della Buono, Richard A., and David Fasenfest, eds., *Social Change, Resistance and Social Practices*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010

Docherty, Thomas, *Aesthetic Democracy*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2006

Docking, Gil, with additions by Michael Dunn, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, Auckland, David Bateman, 1990

Dunn, Michael, *New Zealand Painting: A Concise History*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2003

Ellsworth-Jones, Will, *Banksy: The Man behind the Wall*, London, Aurum, 2012

Ensminger, David A., *Visual Vitriol: The Street Art and Subcultures of the Punk and Hardcore Generation*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2011

Erdemci, Fulya, and Danae Mossman, eds., *Wandering Lines: Towards a New Culture of Space*, *SCAPE 2008 Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space, 19 September – 2 November 2008,* Christchurch, Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2008

Fairey, Shepard, *Covert to Overt: The Underground/Overground Art of Shepard Fairey*, New York, Rizzoli, 2015

Farrell, Fiona, *The Quake Year: Interviews by Fiona Farrell*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2012

Feeney, Warren, *The Canterbury Society of Arts, 1880-1996: Conformity and Dissension Revisited : A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Otago*, University of Otago, 2008

Feeney, Warren, *The Radical, the Reactionary and the Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1996*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2011

Finkelpearl, Tom, ed., *Dialogues in Public Art*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2000

Forman, Murray, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*, Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 2002

French, Blair, ed., *SCAPE 2010 Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space, Volume One: Guide & Reader*, Christchurch, Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2010

French, Blair, ed., *SCAPE 7 Volume One: Guide/Reader*, Christchurch, SCAPE Public Art, 2014

French, Blair, ed., *SCAPE 7 Volume Two: Artist Projects*, Christchurch, SCAPE Public Art, 2014

Fyfe, Nicholas R., ed., *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space*, London and New York, Routledge, 1998

Gastman, Roger, and Sonja Teri, *Los Angeles Graffiti*, New York, Mark Batty Publisher, 2007

Gastman, Roger, and Caleb Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*, New York, Harper Design, 2011

Godfrey, Brian J., *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1988

Gompertz, Will, *What Are You Looking At? : The Surprising, Shocking, and Sometimes Strange Story of 150 Years of Modern Art,* New York, Penguin, 2012

Gorman, Paul, ed., *A City Recovers: Christchurch Two Years After the Quakes*, Auckland, Random House, 2013

Grévy, Fabienne, (translated by Nicholas Elliot), *Graffiti Paris*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2008

Griffin, Jonathan, Paul Harper, David Trigg and Eliza Williams (authors), Lee Beard and Rebecca Morrill, (editors), *The Twenty-First Century Art Book*, London/New York, Phaidon, 2014

Gröndahl, Mia, *Gaza Graffiti: Messages of Love and Politics*, Cairo/New York, The American University in Cairo Press, 2009

Gross, Larry, ed., *On the Margins of the Art World*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995

Harcourt, Bernard E, *Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Havard University Press, 2001

Harding, David, with Pavel Büchler, eds., *Decadent – Public Art: Contentious Term and Contested Practice*, Glasgow, Foulis Press, 1997

Heller, Steven, and Véronique Vienne, eds., *Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility*, New York, Allworth Press, 2007

Hénaff, Marcel, and Tracy B. Strong, eds., *Public Space and Democracy,* Minneapolis/London, University of Minnesota Press, 2001

Highmore, Ben, *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005

Hoffman, Susanna M., and Anthony Oliver-Smith, eds., *Catastrophe & Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*, Santa Fe, New Mexico, School of American Research Press, 2002

Holman, Jeffrey Paparoa, *Shaken Down 6.3 – Poems from the second Christchurch earthquake, 22 February 2011*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2012

Howey, Glen, *Please Demolish with a Kind Heart: Behind Christchurch's Red Zone*, Auckland, PQ Blackwell, 2015

Ingold, Tim, *The Perception of the Environment – Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000

Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York, Random House Inc., 1961

Jackson, Shannon, *Social Works – Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, New York and London, Routledge, 2011

JAKe, *The Mammoth Book of Street Art*, London and Philadelphia, Constable & Robinson Ltd and Running Press Book Publishers, 2012

Johnson, Nuala C., ed., *Culture and Society – Critical Essays in Human Geography*, Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008

Kaplan, David H., and James O. Wheeler, Steven R. Holloway, *Urban Geography*, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004

King Adz, *Street Knowledge*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 2010

King, Leslie, and Reginald Golledge, *Cities, Space & Behaviour: The Elements of Urban Geography*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978

Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine – The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, London, Allen Lane/Penguin, 2007

Klein, Norman M., *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*, London/New York, Verso, 1997

Klett, Mark, with Michael Lundgren, essays by Philip L. Fradkin and Rebecca Solnit, and an interview with the photographer by Karin Breuer, *After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 2006

Kohn, Margaret, *Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space*, New York, Routledge, 2004

Kuittinen, Rikka, *Street Craft: Guerrilla Gardening/Yarnbombing/Light Graffiti/ Street Sculpture/ And More*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2015

Lazarides, Steve, *Outsiders – Art by People*, London, Century, 2008

Lefebvre, Henri, (translated by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore), *Rhythmanalysis – Space, Time and Everyday Life*, London and New York, Continuum, 2004

Levick, Melba, (photographs), and Stanley Young (commentaries), *Murals of Los Angeles: The Big Picture*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1988

Levitt, Helen, (photographs), and Robert Coles, (essay), *In The Street – Chalk Drawings and Messages, New York City, 1938-1948*, Durham, North Carolina, A Lyndhurst Book, published by Duke University Press, in association with the Center for Documentary Studies, 1987

Lewisohn, Cedar, *Street Art – The Graffiti Revolution*, London, Tate Publishing, 2008

Light, Alan, ed., *The VIBE History of Hip Hop*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 1999

Lofland, Lyn H., *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*, New York, Aldine De Gruyter, 1998

Lovell-Smith, Hubert John, *Before and after; photographs taken in Hastings, New Zealand showing effect of the earthquake of February 3rd, 1931*, Christchurch, Lovell-Smith & Venner, 1931

Macdonald, Nancy, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York*, Hampshire and New York, Palgrave, 2001

Mailer, Norman and Jon Naar, *The Faith of Graffiti*, New York, Wasted Talent/HarperCollins, 2009

Manco, Tristan, *Stencil Graffiti*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002

Manco, Tristan, Lost Art and Caleb Neelon, *Graffiti Brasil*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2005

Manco, Tristan, *Street Logos*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2005

Manco, Tristan, *Big Art, Small Art*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2014

Martinez, Hugo, with photographs by NATO, *Graffiti NYC*, Munich, Berlin/London, New York, Prestel, 2006

Mason, Matt, *The Pirate's Dilemma – How Hackers, Punk Capitalists and Graffiti Millionaires are Remixing our Culture and Changing the World*, London, Allen Lane, 2008

Mathieson, Eleanor, and Xavier A. Tàpies, with photography by Glenn Arango, *Street Artists, The Complete Guide*, London, Graffito Books, 2009

McGregor, Robert, (text), and Peter Hallet (contemporary photography), *The Great Quake: The Story of the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake*, Napier, Regional Publications, 1989

McGregor, Robert, *The Art Deco City: Napier, New Zealand*, Napier, Art Deco Trust, 1998

Miles, Malcolm, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, London, Routledge, 1997

Miles, Malcolm, *Urban Avant-Gardes: Art, Architecture & Change*, London, Routledge, 2004

Miles, Malcolm, *Cities and Cultures*, London/New York, Routledge, 2007

Mitchell, W.J.T., ed., *Art and the Public Sphere*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992

Montejo, Gaby, *D fence*, Christchurch, Lulu, 2011

Moore, Christopher, with Press Journalists, images by Press and Fairfax photographers, picture research by Jude Tewnion, *Earthquake: Christchurch, New Zealand 22 February 2011*, Auckland, Random House, 2011

Munro, Fraser, *graf/AK*, Auckland, Beatnik Publishing, 2012

O'Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space (Expanded Edition)*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1999

O'Donnell, Elliot, *InForm – New Zealand Graffiti Artists Discuss Their Work*, Auckland, Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd, 2007

Parker, Simon, *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience: Encountering the City*, London, Routledge, 2004

Parr, Alison, *Remembering Christchurch: Voices from Decades Past*, New Zealand, Penguin, 2015

Parry, William, *Against the Wall: The Art of Resistance in Palestine*, London/Chicago, Lawrence Hill Books, 2010

Potts, Annie, and Donelle Gadenne, *Animals in Emergencies: Learning from the Christchurch Earthquakes*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2014

Poupeye, Veerle, *Caribbean Art*, London, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1998

Powers, Stephen, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millenium*, London, St Martin's Press, 1999

Prou, Sybille, and King Adz, *Blek le Rat: Getting through the walls*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2008

Rhodes, Colin, *Outsider Art, Spontaneous Alternatives*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2000

Rice, Geoffrey, and Jean Sharfe, *Christchurch Changing: An Illustrated History, 2nd Edition*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2008

Rogers, Anna, *The Shaky Isles: New Zealand Earthquakes*, Wellington, Grantham House, 2013

RomanyWG, *Out of Sight: Urban Art/Abandoned Spaces*, Durham, Carpet Bombing Culture, Durham, United Kingdom, 2011

RomanyWG, *Burn After Reading*, Carpet Bombing Culture, Durham, United Kingdom, 2012

Rotenburgh, Robert, and Gary McDonogh, eds., *The Cultural Meaning of Urban Space*, Westport, Connecticut, Bergin & Garvey, 1993

Ruiz, Maximiliano, *Walls & Frames – Fine Art from the Streets*, Berlin, Gestalten, 2011,

Sabin, Roger, ed., *Punk rock: So what? The cultural legacy of punk*, London & New York, Routledge, 1999

Saul, Eric, and Don Denevi, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*, Millbrae, California, Celestial Arts, 1981

Scallon, Ron, and Suzie Wong Scallon, *Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World*. London & New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2003

Schacter, Rafael, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, Sydney, Newsouth Publishers, 2013

Senie, Harriet, and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context & Controversy*, Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998

Seno, Ethel, ed., with Carlo McCormick, Marc and Sara Schiller, *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art*, Köln, Taschen, 2010

Sessions, Laura, (text), and Craig Bullock (photography), *Quake Dogs: Heart-warming stories of Christchurch's dogs*, Auckland, Random House, 2013

Smallman, Jake, and Carl Nyman, *Stencil Graffiti Capital: Melbourne*, Brooklyn, New York, Mark Batty Publisher, 2011

Solnit, Rebecca, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, New York, Penguin Books, 2000

Solnit, Rebecca, *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*, New York, Penguin Books, 2010

Staigen, Uta, Henriette Steiner, and Andrew Webber, eds., *Memory Culture and the Contemporary City: Building Sites,* New York, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2009

Stanback, Jr., Thomas M., *The New Suburbanization: Challenge to the Central City*, Boulder/San Francisco/Oxford, Westview Press, 1991

Stewart, Jack, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*, New York, Melcher Media/Abrams, 2009

Stik, *Stik*, London, Century, 2015

Sussman, Elisabeth, *Keith Haring*, New York, Whitney Museum of Art, 1997

Thompson, Margo, *American Graffiti*, New York, Parkstone Press International, 2009

The Press, *The Big Quake : Canterbury, September 4, 2010*, Auckland, Random House, 2010

Turner, Richard Brent, *Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans*, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2009

Uncredited, *Mike Hewson – Understanding Loss, 29 Nov- 10 Dec 2011*, Melbourne, Fortyfive Downstairs Gallery, 2011

van Beynen, Martin, *Trapped: Remarkable Stories of Survival from the 2011 Canterbury Earthquake*, Auckland, Penguin, 2012

Waclawek, Anna, *Graffiti and Street Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2011

Walde, Claudia, *Sticker City: Paper Graffiti Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2007

Wethey, David, (photographs), Ian Stuart (text), *Quake: the Big Canterbury Earthquake of 2010*, Auckland, Harper Collins, 2010

Wimsatt, William 'Upski', *Bomb the Suburbs*, Brooklyn, Subway & Elevated/Softskull Press, 2000 (2nd ed.)

Workhorse and Pac, introduction by Haze, *We Own the Night: The Art of the Underbelly Project*, New York, Rizzoli, 2012

Wright, Matthew, *Quake: Hawke's Bay 1931*, Auckland, Reed, 2001

Young, Alison, *Street Art, Public Street: Law, crime and the public imagination*, Abingdon & New York, Routledge, 2014

Zukin, Sharon, *Landscapes of Power – From Detroit to Disney World*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1991

Periodicals/Articles:

Banbury, Grant, and Sally Blundell, "Two Takes on Christchurch: The City Transformed", *Art New Zealand*, Number 142, Winter, 2012, pp. 23-29

Blundell, Sally, "Teeth survive in city's broken jaw", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 11, 2012, p. C10

Bowron, Jane, "Contemplating ghostly seats", *The Press*, Monday, May 21, 2012, p. A13

Brooklyn Street Art, "Owen Dippie "Radiant Madonna" unites Raphael and Haring in Brooklyn", July 11, 2015, http://www.brooklynstreetart.com/theblog/2015/07/11/owen-dippie-radiant-madonna-unites-raphael-and-haring-in-brooklyn/, accessed February 25, 2016

Cairns, Lois, "Tagged: graffiti makes eyesore of city", *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, November 28, 2015, p. A1

Campbell Live, "Christchurch graffiti a public art gallery", August 9, 2012, http://www.3news.co.nz/Christchurch-graffiti-a-public-art-gallery/tabid/817/articleID/264829/Default.aspx, accessed January 21, 2013

Campos, Ricardo, "Graffiti writer as superhero", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2013, 16:155, http://ecs.sagepub.com.content/16/2/155, accessed October 19, 2013

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, "Artist Interview – Wayne Youle", undated, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/film/artist-interviews/wayne-youle/, accessed August 20, 2013

Christchurch City Council, "Graffiti on the Gallery", 2001, http://www.ccc.govt.govt.nz/MediaReleases/2001/April/GraffitiOnTheGallery.asp, accessed March 23, 2003

Christchurch City Council and New Zealand Historic Places Trust, *City and Architectural Heritage Guide*, undated

Christchurch City Council, "Christchurch City Population Summary, 1981-2010", http://www.ccc.govt.nz/cityleisure/statsfacts/statistics/population.aspx, accessed July 10, 2012

Colacello, Bob, "How do you solve a problem like MOCA?", *Vanity Fair*, March 2013, pp. 120-125

Cropp, Amanda, "My year of living warily", *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, February 19, 2012, pp. C4-C5

Dally, Joelle, "Tagging plague 'more skanksy than Banksy'", *Sunday Star Times*, November 4, 2012, p. A4

Dally, Joelle, “Christchurch earthquake memorial designs unveiled”, February 17, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/66291618/Christchurch-earthquake-memorial-designs-unveiled, accessed February 28, 2015

Dibben, Kay, “Renowned Brisbane artist Anthony Lister charged with graffiti”, November 9, 2014, http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/renowned-brisbane-artist-anthony-lister-charged-with-graffiti/story-fnihsrf2-1227117083290, accessed November 10, 2015

Duray, Dan, “Smithsonian Announces James Dicke Contemporary Art Prize Nominees”, August 15, 2014, http://www.artnews.com/2014/08/15/smithsonian-announces-james-dicke-contemporary-art-prize-nominees/, accessed August 20, 2014

De Felice, Christine, “Tagger faces hefty bill”, *The Star*, Wednesday, August 14, 2013, p. 7

Deutsche, Rosalyn, and Cara Gendel Ryan, “The Fine Art of Gentrification”, *October*, Volume 31, Winter, 1984, pp. 91-111

Dickens, Luke, “Placing post-graffiti: the journey of the Peckham Rock”, *Cultural Geographies*, 15:471, 2008, http://cgj.sagepub.com/content/15/4/471, October 12, 2013

Duff, Michelle, “New Zealand’s weird and wonderful public art”, June 21, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/arts/69484592/New-Zealands-weird-and-wonderful-public-art, January 21, 2016

Alan Dundes, “Here I Sit – A Study of American Latrinalia”, 1966, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/kas034-010.pdf, March 15, 2016

English, Ron, “Ron English: Public Art Definitive”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 118-129

Fairey, Shepard, *Obey Manifesto*, 1990, http://www.obeygiant.com/about, accessed January 10, 2016

Farr, Kristin, “JR”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 62-75

Feeney, Warren, “Christchurch – A City Responds to Catastrophe”, *Art New Zealand*, no 138, Winter 2011, pp. 18-19

Feeney, Warren, “Warren Feeney’s Survey of 2012”, January 16, 2013, http://eyecontactsite.com/2013/01/warren-feeneys-survey-of#ixzz2IkKGn9hi, accessed January 21, 2013

Feeney, Warren, “Street Art Extravaganza”, January 10, 2014, http://eyecontactsite.com/2014/01/street-art-extravaganza, accessed March 20, 2915

Felton, Ryan, “Shepard Fairey vandalism case ‘disappoints’ Detroit arts community”, *The Guardian*, October 9, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/09/detroit-shepard-fairey-vandalism-case-arts-community, accessed November 3, 2015

Gamble, Warren, “Nature returns as city buildings vanish”, *The Press*, Monday, February 20, 2012, p. A5

Gates, Charlie, “Through the looking glass for a flat white”, December 21, 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/6158986/Through-the-looking-glass-for-a-flat-white, accessed November 9, 2014

Gates, Charlie, “Cone tribute goes global”, *The Press*, Thursday, February 23, 2012, p. A6

Gates, Charlie, “Artists bid farewell to Government Life building”, *The Press*, Saturday, May 19, 2012, p. A11

Gates, Charlie, “Heartbreaking goodbyes in the residential red zone”, *The Press*, Monday, July 30, 2012, p. A4

Gates, Charlie, “Tour of duty in shattered suburbia”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 18, 2012, p. A9

Gates, Charlie, “Mural an artist’s personal goodbye”, *The Press*, Friday, January 25, 2013, p. A5

Gates, Charlie, “’Faces and figures’ for inner city”, *The Press*, Wednesday, February 13, 2013, p. A10

Gates, Charlie, “Car parks taking over the city centre”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, July 20, 2013, p. A6

Gates, Charlie, “The bull is back – maybe to stay”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 24, 2013, p. A9

Gates, Charlie, “Banksy street art features in festival”, *The Press*, Tuesday, September 24, 2013, p. A3

Gates, Charlie, “City murals seen as tagger deterrent”, January 30, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/city-centre/9664713/City-murals-seen-as-tagger-deterrent, accessed September 16, 2014

Charlie Gates, “Who is the real Milton Springsteen?”, March 14, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/9826823/Who-is-the-real-Milton-Springsteen, accessed May 5, 2014

Gates, Charlie, “British artist Martin Creed brings ironic message of hope to Christchurch”, September 26, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/72427405/british-artist-martin-creed-brings-ironic-message-of-hope-to-christchurch.html, accessed March 4, 2016

Gates, Charlie, “Museum opts out after T-shirt controversy”, *The Press*, Friday, October 23, 2015, p. A1

Gates, Charlie, “Street art festival returns’, *The Press*, Friday, October 23, 2015, p. A14

Gates, Charlie, “Art returns to Chch streets”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 5, 2015, p. A16

Gates, Charlie, “Spectrum kicks off hot summer of art”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 12, 2015, p. A7

Gates, Charlie, “Christchurch Art Gallery reopening after nearly 5 years of closure”, December 19, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/75259288/christchurch-art-gallery-reopening-after-nearly-5-years-of-closure, accessed January 14, 2016

Gates, Charlie, and Nicole Matthewson, “Burning of art will release Christchurch stories”, *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A1

Gawith, Libby, “Upheaval on many levels”, *The Press* (*22/2 One Year On: Taking Stock* supplement), Thursday, February 23, 2012, pp. 6-7

Tessa Giblin, “Gridlocked Project, organised by the Physics Room”, undated, http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/archived/gridlocked/, accessed September 18, 2012

Greenhill, Marc, “Sumner containers shipping out”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, September 7, 2013, p. A7

Ken Hall, “Doc Ross – Phantom City”, in *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, *B.168*, Winter, June-August, 2012, p. 11

Halsey, Mark, and Alison Young, “’Our desires are ungovernable’: Writing graffiti in urban space”, *Theoretical Criminology*, August 2006, Volume 10, Number 3, pp. 275-306

Hannan, Hayley, “Taggers hit police street art campaign”, July 20, 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10739544, accessed September 15, 2014

Hanton, Jamie and Ash Keating, “We Built this City on Rock and Roll”, *Oculus – Postgraduate Journal for Visual Arts Research*, Issue No.3, March 2011, pp. 65-69

Harold, Christine, “Pranking Rhetoric: Culture Jamming as Media Activism”, *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 2004, pp. 189-211

Harvie, Will, “Feast of the dinosaurs”, *The Weekend Press* (*Your Weekend* supplement), Saturday, December 15, 2012, pp. 12-13

Will Harvie, “Fine line between art and graffiti”, *The Press*, Monday, January 13, 2014, p. A5

King, Caroline, “Too much city parking – Gap Filler”, *The Press*, Monday, June 3, 2013, p. A10

Kirsch, Christopher, “Banksy on New Orleans”, *New Orleans Review*, Volume 3, Issue 1, June 2009, p.61

Kramer, Ronald, “Painting with Permission: Leal graffiti in New York City”, Ethnography, Volume 11, Number 2, 2010, pp. 235-253

Law, Tina, “Input sought on New Brighton”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, July 14, 2012, p. A9

Lee, Francesca, “Vacant lots being turned into city bright spots”, *The Press*, Monday, July 30, 2012, p. A18

Ligon, Glenn, “To Miss New Orleans”, *Artforum*, Volume 47, Issue 5, January 2009, pp. 168-171

Low, Nic, “Ear to the ground”, *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, February 19, 2012, p. C12-C13

Lynch, Chris, “Get tough on taggers”, *The Star*, Wednesday, August 14, 2013, p. 10

Lynch, Chris, “Appalling CTV saga drags on”, *The Star*, Wednesday, December 11, 2013, p. 11

Lynch, Keith, “Gallery won’t open till 2013”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 28, 2012, p. A5

Mann, Brittany, “Graffiti reaches new heights in Christchurch CBD”, July 26, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/70550028/Graffiti-reaches-new-heights-in-Christchurch-CBD, accessed June 1, 2015

Mason, Alex, “What scumbags would do this?”, *The Star*, Wednesday, September 19, 2012, p. 1-2

Mathewson, Nicole, “Addington makes the travel A-list”, September 24, 2012, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/7719637/Addington-makes-the-travel-A-list

Matthewson, Nicole, “Winner gets to torch art”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 10, 2013, p. A13

Maxwell, Ian, “Hasty gutting of city will only increase social divide”, *The Press*, Wednesday, April 4, 2012, p. A19

McAuliffe, Cameron, “Legal walls and Professional Paths: The Mobilities of Graffiti Writers in Sydney”, *Urban Studies*, Volume 50, Number 3, February 2013, pp. 518-537

McClish, Carmen L., “Orange Houses and Tape Babies: Temporary and Nebulous Art in Urban Spaces”, *Culture Unbound – Journal of Current Cultural Research*, Volume 2, 2010, pp. 847-865

McCormick, Carlo, “Keith Haring: Legacy of a Lifetime”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.167, December 2014, pp. 48-59

McCracken, Heather, “Fine for ‘sorry’ CTV tagger”, *The Star*, Friday, August 30, 2013, p. 3

McCrone, John, “Down and Out”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 26, 2013, p. C4

McCrone, John, “Rumblings of rebellion”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 10, 2013, pp. C4–C5

McManus, Austin, “Graffiti in Tahiti – Ono’u Graffiti Festival”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.164, September 2014, pp. 114-116

McManus, Austin, “Sever”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.177, October 2015, pp. 72-83

McPherson, Samantha, “Bulldozer gets rid of ‘smiley’”, *The Star*, Friday, August 24, 2012, p. 4

Moore, Christopher, “Mind the gap”, *The Press* (*GO Arts* section), Friday, June 24, 2011, pp. 7-9

Moore, Christopher, “The Art of Fencing”, *The Weekend Press* (*Your Weekend* supplement), Saturday, October 6, 2012, p. 6

Moore, Christopher, “Vibrant art for Square”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, July 6, 2013, p. A9

McIntyre, Sally Ann, “Dreaming of a hand-painted Paradise – views of the flat city”, undated, http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/archived/gridlocked/writing.htm, accessed September 18, 2012

Napier, Abbie, “Tagforce spells an end to graffiti”, *The Christchurch Mail*, Thursday, October 18, 2012, p. 1

Napier, Abbie, “Heritage: what’s left?”, *The Christchurch Mail*, Thursday, October 18, 2012, p. 3

Napier, Abbie, “Tag team blasting graffiti”, *The Christchurch Mail*, Thursday, October 18, 2012, p. 4

Napier, Abbie, “Sanctioned graffiti is ‘bad news’”, *The Christchurch Mail*, Thursday, October 25, 2012, p. 3

Napier, Abbie, “Wall art on display at Re:START”, *The Christchurch Mail*, November 22, 2012, p. 2

Napier, Abbie, “Seventh piece tells salty yarn”, *The Christchurch Mail*, July 11, 2013, p. 9

Napier, Abbie, “Rockfall threat now contained”, *The Christchurch Mail*, August 22, 2013, p. 13

O’Connor, Sarah-Jane, “Historic day: red zone cordon lifted”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, June 29, 2013, p. A1

Oram, Rod, “Rebuild needs a rethink”, *Sunday Star Times*, Sunday, August 5, 2012, p. D24

Paton, Justin, “Here and Gone – Public Sculpture, the Art of Memory and the Ghost Ship of Ferry Road”, *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.166, Summer, December 2011-February 2012, pp. 26-33

Paton, Justin, “After the Deluge”, *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.165, Spring, September-November 2011, pp. 32-39

Paton, Justin, “Perimeter Notes: A Day Around the Red Zone”, *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.167, Autumn, March-May 2012, pp. 16-25

Paton, Justin, “Outer Spaces”, *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.167, Autumn, March-May 2012, pp. 26-29

Pickles, Katie, “A natural break from our colonial past”, *The Press*, Friday, April 8, 2011, p. A15

Pinder, David, “Arts of Urban Exploration”, *Cultural Geographies*, Volume 12, 2005, pp. 383-411

Pricco, Evan, “Fame Festival”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 48-61

Pricco, Evan, “Aryz”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.144, January 2013, pp. 38-49

Pricco, Evan, “Shepard Fairey”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.162, July 2014, pp. 48-59

Pricco, Evan, “Street Art 3.0 – How Norway’s venerable street art festival defines the new era”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.166, November 2014, pp. 114-116

Revelli, M, “Introduction”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May, 2012, p. 8

Revelli, M., with Rolle Hogan and Evan Pricco, “Public Art Call to Action”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 16-21

Revelli, M., and Evan Pricco, “Nuart”, *Juxtapoz Art + Culture*, n.136, May 2012, pp. 76-89

Robinson, Shelley, “Tagging angers locals”, *Pegasus Post*, Monday, December 10, 2012

Robinson, Shelley, “Red zone a mix of delight, despair”, *The Star*, Friday, February 22, 2013, p. 4

Robinson, Shelley, “Tagging continues to frustrate”, *The Community News*, Monday, January 7, 2013, p. 3

Rojo, Jaime, and Steven Harrington, “India’s First Street Art Fest and the Largest Gandhi Portrait Ever”, *Huffington Post*, April 6, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-rojo-steven-harrington/start-dehli-2014_b_5441294.html, accessed July 28, 2014

Sachdeva, Sam, “Splashes of colour bring life back to quake-weary city”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, October 6, 2012, pp. A8-9

Simpson, David, “Talk to the hand”, October 22, 2013, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2013/10/22/talk-to-the-hand/, accessed September 15, 2014

Sleigh, Thomasin, “How can they ban graffiti?”, *The Press*, Wednesday, March 5, 2008, p. D4

Sleigh, Thomasin, “Tell Me to My Face”, December 1, 2008, http://hspgallery.blogspot.co.nz/2007/12/tell-me-to-my-face-from-1-december-2008.html, accessed September 18, 2012

Smith, Cullen, “Insurance delays cost couple”, *The Star*, Wednesday, May 23, 2012, p. 5

Smith, Cullen, “City still evolving”, *The Star*, Friday, February 22, 2013, p. 3

Smith, Cullen, “Brownlee butt of protest”, *The Star*, Wednesday, May 8, 2013, p. 1

Solnit, Rebecca, “Cities of Remembrance”, *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.168, Winter, June-August, 2012, pp. 26-30

Stephens, Simone, “Public Art in Central Christchurch: A Study by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1997”, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2010_07/PublicArt-ChCh-1997.pdf, accessed August 20, 2012

Stewart, Ashleigh, “City’s change of heart”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, November 24, 2012, p. A18

Stewart, Ashleigh, “Shipping containers to be removed from Sumner”, August 14, 2015, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/71145561/Shipping-containers-to-be-removed-from-Sumner, accessed, February 4, 2016

Stewart, Tamlyn, “Central city versus suburbs”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, October 20, 2012, p. C22-24

Stewart, Tamlyn, “Light at the end of the tunnel”, *The Press*, Monday, June 3, 2013, p. A13

Strongman, Lara, “Postcard from Christchurch”, *Art News New Zealand*, Winter 2012, p. 40

Stylianou, Georgina, “Demolitions draw to an end”, *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A3

Stylianou, Georgina, “Certainty pours into central city”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, September 21, 2013, p. A2

Stylianou, Georgina, “Sydenham rebuild stalemate may end”, *The Press*, Monday, September 9, 2013, p. A5

Stylianou, Georgina, “Cordons are gone and the guard marches out”, *The Press*, Monday, July 1, 2013, p. A1

Stylianou, Georgina, “Suburb stuck at ground zero – pleas to end stalemate over Colombo St future”, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/southern/9732663/Suburb-stuck-at-ground-zero, accessed February 26, 2014

Stylianou, Georgina, “Park bench dedication to Gerry Brownlee”, November 21, 2013 http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/city-centre/9425736/Park-bench-dedication-to-Gerry-Brownlee, accessed November 22, 2013

Tobin, Chris, “Flowers in cones hits Japan”, *Mainland Press*, Thursday, March 8, 2012, p. 3

Turner, Anna, “Angry homeowners sign of the times”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, June 29, 2013, p. A7

Turner, Anna, “Taggers show contempt for CTV site”, *The Press*, Monday, August 12, 2013, p. A1

Uncredited, “Fiasko”, *Disrupt Magazine*, Issue 6, 2005, pp. 12-17

Uncredited, “Trust Me”, *Disrupt Magazine*, Issue 6, 2005, pp. 74-78

Uncredited, “Ikarus & Dcypher”, *Disrupt Magazine*, Issue 6, 2005, pp. 86-89

Uncredited, “Trust Me”, *Sideroom.com Magazine*, Volume 1, Winter, 2007, pp. 20-21

Uncredited, “Drypnz”, *Sideroom.com Magazine*, Number 2, 2007, p. 57

Uncredited, “Stacey Turner. From 3 March 2008”, March 2008, http://hspgallery.blogspot.co.nz/2008/03/stacey-turner-from-3-march-2008.html, accessed September 18, 2012

Uncredited, “Mueck exhibition breaks records”, January 18, 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/4550482/Mueck-exhibition-breaks-records, accessed March 4, 2016

Uncredited, “Cop art pops up in city”, July 15, 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/5287612/Cop-art-pops-up-in-city, accessed September 9, 2014

Uncredited, “In Memoriam: Those We Lost”, *The Press*, Wednesday, February 22, 2012, p. 2

Uncredited, “Cordon loosens grip on central city”, *The Press (22/2 One Year On: The Year That Was* supplement), Monday, February 20, 2012, p. 2

Uncredited, “Changing face of shattered city”, *The Press (22/2 One Year On: The Year That Was* supplement), Monday, February 20, 2012, p. 7

Uncredited, “22/2 A Broken City”, *The Press*, Wednesday, February 22, 2012, p. A6

Uncredited, “Installation represents victims’ personalities”, February 23, 2012, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/6464369/Installation-represents-victims-personalities, accessed March 15, 2016

Uncredited, “Window Treatments”, *Bunker Notes: The Christchurch Art Gallery Blog*, March 19, 2012, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2012/03/19/window-treatments/, accessed March 20, 2012

Uncredited, “Discomfort Zone”, *Bunker Notes: The Christchurch Art Gallery Blog*, March 23, 2012, http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/bunker-notes/2012/03/23/sssfgvswfgvsw/, accessed Mar 30, 2012

Uncredited, “Company’s hotel demolition job ‘award’ winner”, *The Press*, Friday, April 27, 2012, p. A5

Uncredited, “Needleworkers worldwide add colour to Sumner roadside container”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, May 5, 2012, p. A7

Uncredited, “Murals brighten up Christchurch landscape: Return of Colour”, *Sunday News*, October 7, 2012, p. 6

Uncredited, “Splash of colour for central city”, *The Press*, Monday, November 12, 2012, p.A5

Uncredited, “Call it karma – tagger ‘lifted’”, *The Christchurch Mail*, Thursday, October 18, 2012, p. 5

Uncredited, “Beware: easy driving ahead”, *The Press*, Monday, December 24, 2012, p. A7

Uncredited, “’Sleepy hollow’ in shock at swathe of vandalism”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 5, 2013, p. A15

Uncredited, “Rockfall in Sumner a warning for residents and the city council”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 26, 2013, p. A21

Uncredited, “Wayne Youle: I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour”, in *Bulletin - Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, B.172, Winter, May-August, 2013, p. 42

Uncredited, “Dancing cranes rumble through city”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, June 29, 2013, p. A13

Uncredited, “Cathedral stirs emotions”, *The Star*, Wednesday, July 31, 2013, p. 8

Uncredited, “Rise exhibition most successful in Museum’s history”, January 27, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/78/rise-exhibition-most-successful-in-museums-history, accessed September 19, 2014

Uncredited, “RISE attracts more than 200,000 visitors”, March 4, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/79/rise-attracts-more-than-200000-visitors, accessed September 19, 2014

Uncredited, “Painted profiles from Askew One”, March 6, 2014, http://www.juxtapoz.com/illustration/painted-profiles-from-askew-one, accessed April 7, 2015

Uncredited, “Award winning achievement for Canterbury Museum”, April 4, 2014, http://www.canterburymuseum.com/news/83/award-winning-achievement-for-canterbury-museum, accessed January 2, 2016

Uncredited, “The Four Avenues: Which is the fourth?”, *The Press*, August 18, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/10393734/The-Four-Avenues-Which-is-the-fourth, accessed 24 September, 2015

Uncredited, “Street art showcase at demolition house”, August 18, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/10392466/Street-art-showcase-at-demolition-house, accessed March 2, 2016

Uncredited, “Photographic reminder of quake-hit buildings”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 3, 2015, p. A8

Uncredited, “Banksy’s taking the Mickey at Dismaland”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, August 22, 2015, p. B2

Were, Virginia, “When the dust settles”, *Art News New Zealand*, Winter 2011, pp. 76-82

Wollan, Malia, “Graffiti’s Cosy, Feminine Side”, *The New York Times* (*Lifestyle* section), May 18, 2011, p. E1

Wood, Andrew Paul, “Seismic adventures in tsunami of art”, *The Press* (*Go Arts* section), Friday, June 10, 2011, p. 10

Andrew Paul Wood, “Heaphy and Hughes in Christchurch”, July 17, 2013, http://eyecontactsite.com/2013/07/hughes-and-heaphy-in-christchurch, accessed July 23, 2014

Michael Wright, “Christchurch quake memorial plans revealed”, December 20, 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/64345669/christchurch-quake-memorial-plans-revealed, accessed December 20, 2014

Yardley, Mike, “Vandals deserve spell behind bars”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, January 5, 2013, p. C8

Young, Rachel, “Book captures city’s transformation”, *The Weekend Press*, Saturday, December 15, 2012, p. A15

Zammit, Eddie, “Owen Dippie: Profile”, *No Cure Magazine*, Issue 9, 2015, pp. 28-36

Zammit, Eddie, “Oi YOU! Street Art”, *No Cure Magazine*, Issue 9, 2015, p. 102

Film/Video:

Alter Ego: A Worldwide Documentary about Graffiti Writing, dir. Daniel Thouw, ThouwMedia, 2008

Dregs, dir. and prod. Karl Sheridan and Cinzah Merkens, Dregs Ltd, 2012

Exit Through the Gift Shop, dir. Banksy, Paranoid Pictures, 2010

If These Walls Could Talk – Askew One, dir. Ross Liew, 2014, http://ifthesewallscouldtalk.co.nz/episode/askew-one/

If These Walls Could Talk - Benjamin Work, dir. Ross Liew, 2014, http://ifthesewallscouldtalk.co.nz/episode/benjamin-work/

If These Walls Could Talk – BMD, dir. Ross Liew, 2014, http://ifthesewallscouldtalk.co.nz/episode/bmd/

If These Walls Could Talk – Elliott Francis Stewart, dir. Ross Liew, 2014, http://ifthesewallscouldtalk.co.nz/episode/elliot-francis-stewart/

If These Walls Could Talk – Mica Still, dir. Ross Liew, 2014, http://ifthesewallscouldtalk.co.nz/episode/mica-still/

Inside Out: The People's Art Project, dir. Alistair Siddons, Social Animals, 2013

Limitless, dir. Selina Miles, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv-Do30-P8A , accessed March 10, 2016

Quaked – Skating in Christchurch After Earthquake, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2bvozq-KK8, accessed November 12, 2015

Rash, dir. Nicholas Hansen, Mutiny Media, 2005

Rise Festival, Christchurch, New Zealand Video, shot and edited by Selina Miles, additional still photography by Luke Shirlaw, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhujxbpD6nY, accessed July 15, 2014

Stations of the Elevated, dir., Manfred Kirchheimer, Streetwise Films, 1981

Street Art: Aryz X Finerats, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1g0JzKwQtc, accessed September 22, 2014

Style Wars, dir. Tony Silver, Public Art Films, 1984

The Adolescent City: Ryan Reynolds at TEDxEQChCh, http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=LGYF7nG0UsQ, accessed October 21, 2012

The Art of Recovery, dir. Peter Young, Fisheye Films, 2015

The Human Scale, dir. Andreas Dalsgaard, Final Cut, 2012

Vigilante, Vigilante – The Battle for Expression, dir. Max Good, prods., Max Good and Nathan Wollman, Open Ranch Productions, 2012

When a City Falls, dir. Gerard Smyth, Frank Film in association with NZ Film Commission, 2012

When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts, dir. Spike Lee, HBO Films and 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, 2006

Websites:

http://www.artsfestival.co.nz/

http://www.askew1.com/

http://benjaminwork.tumblr.com/

http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/swoon/

http://www.canterburymuseum.com/

http://www.ceismic.org.nz/

http://chargingbull.com

http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/

http://component.co.nz/

http://cutcollective.co.nz/

http://www.deitch.com/projects/

http://eyecontactsite.com/

http://www.fromthegroundup.org.nz/

http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/

http://www.gardensity.co.nz/

http://ianstrange.com

http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/gallery/2012/measurethecity/

http://www.planetyikes.com/

http://www.juxtapoz.com/

http://www.mikehewson.co.nz/

http://muralmadnessinbrighton.blogspot.co.nz/

http://nga.gov.au/exhibition/spaceinvaders/

https://obeygiant.com/

http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/archived/gridlocked/

http://rockpack.tumblr.com/

http://www.scapebiennial.org.nz/

http://streetarse.co.nz/

http://www.streetsy.com/

www.sydm.co.nz

http://tesssheerin.com/

http://www.wegotsunshine.com/

http://www.whatisthatchch.co.nz

http://www.wongi.co.nz/

http://www.woostercollective.com/